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C. Witwer
Gouverneur Morris
Ida Rogers St. Johns
L. Wodehouse
George Ade
Fredith Nicholson

America's Greatest Magazine



Elias Howe, who saw the feasibility of a sewing-machine, eventually succeeded in developing his first crude design to a point of practical utility. Possessed of the will to succeed he put his work above all personal consideration and despite discouragements and adversity lived to see his invention come into broad acceptance and use.

The Will to Succeed

THE career of Elias Howe, to whom the world owes the first practical sewing-machine, is stamped with a tenacious and unwavering will to succeed. Once his idea had taken hold of him, he knew no satisfaction until it was realized.

Such a spirit is invariably behind every important achievement. It leads the inventor and the builder to perfect his work and bring it to the point of real and lasting utility.

The early tires built by the Firestone organization served their times satisfactorily and well. Yet without unflagging perseverance and application on the part of

their makers for over two decades, they could never have been developed to their present high point of perfection.

Actuated by ambition to maintain the undisputed quality standard, Firestone has been responsible for a long list of improvements in tire design and construction. The Firestone Gum-Dipped Cord is the result of their cumulative effort, their patient research and exhaustive experiment, and their ceaseless watch over the quality of materials and workmanship.

They have achieved a tire that meets the most exacting needs—reliable, long-wearing, equal to the hardest strains, and economical for any car-owner to use.

Most Miles per Dollar

Firestone

Three new Victrola models



Victrola No. 400
Mahogany, \$250 Electric, \$290



Victrola No. 405
Walnut, \$250 Electric, \$290



Victrola No. 410
Mahogany, \$300 Electric, \$340

The three new Victrola models illustrated herewith incorporate Victrola musical quality in cabinets reflecting all the skill of the master designers of other generations — a perfect combination of art and utility with moderate cost, resulting from our unequalled facilities and long experience.

Fully equipped with albums, Victrola No. 2 sound-box, new improved Victor tapering tone-arm and goose-neck sound-box tube, full-floating amplifier, speed indicator and the simple, reliable Victor motor.

Built entirely in the Victor factories, which are the largest devoted entirely to the production of one musical product.

In buying a talking-machine consider that you must choose the Victrola or something you hope will do as well and remember that the Victrola—the standard by which all are judged — costs no more.

A selected list of Victor Records illustrating Victor quality

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|---------------------------|-----------------------------|-------|--------|
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| Berceuse from Jocelyn | de Luca, Journet, Bada | 95212 | \$3.50 |
| Elégie—Mélodie | McCormack and Kreisler | 89106 | 2.00 |
| Song of the Volga Boatmen | Caruso and Elman | 89066 | 2.00 |
| Whispering Hope | Chaliapin | 88663 | 1.75 |
| Ave Maria (Schubert) | Gluck and Homer | 87524 | 1.50 |
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| Traviata—Prelude | Galli-Curci | 64792 | 1.25 |
| Waltz of the Flowers | Victor Symphony Orchestra | 35717 | 1.25 |
| National Emblem March | U. S. Marine Band | 18498 | .75 |
| Lights Out March | Arthur Pryor's Band | | |



Victrola

Look under the lid and on the labels for these Victor trade-marks.
Victor Talking Machine Company, Camden, N. J.

COSMOPOLITAN

America's Greatest Magazine

This Month

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Next Month

We Begin

PERSONS UNKNOWN

A Mystery Novel that would

puzzle Sherlock Holmes

By

ARTHUR SOMERS ROCHE

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Prodigal

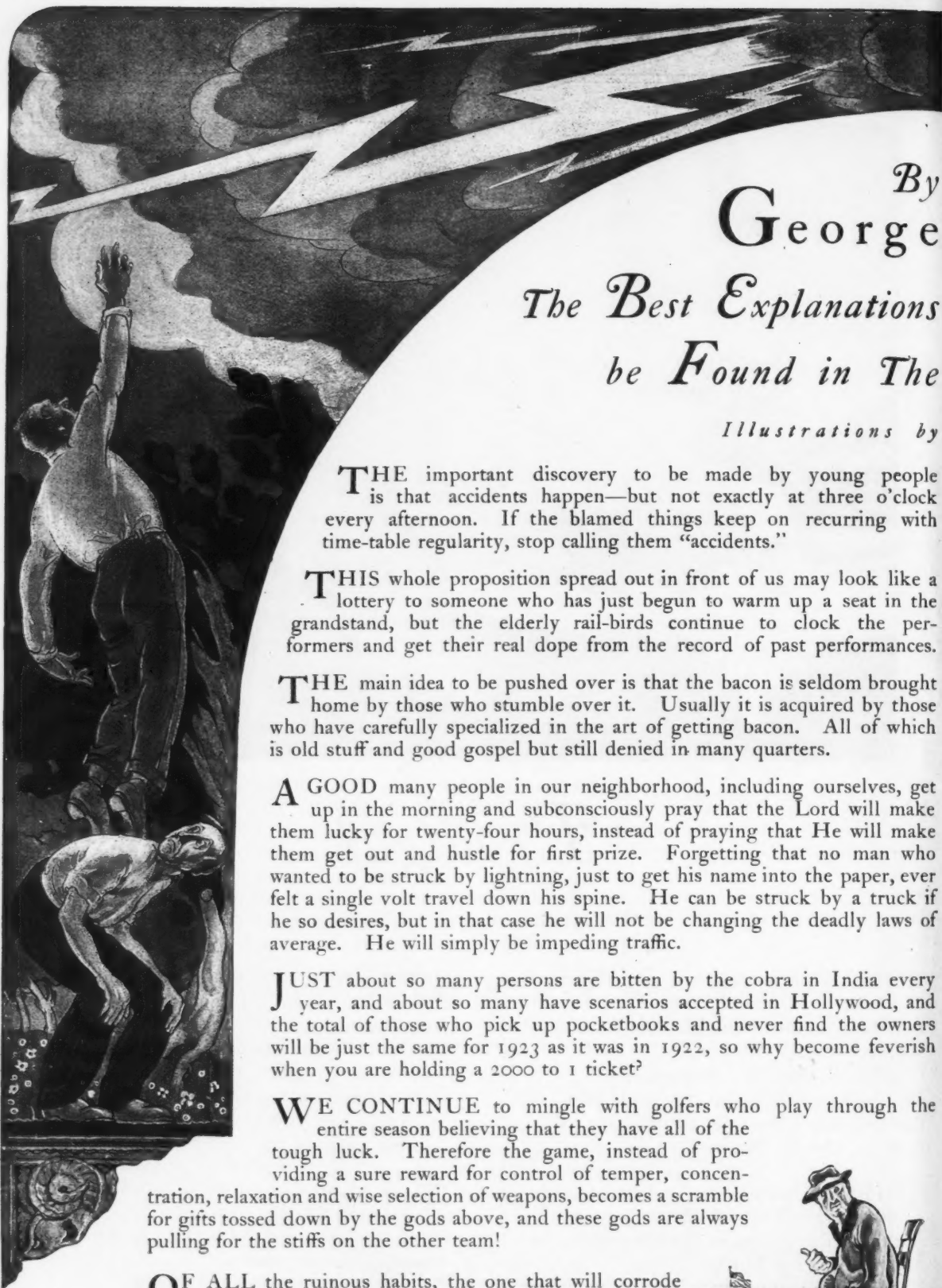
by FRANCESCA FALK MILLER

THERE'S a yearning cry in my heart today,
Mother! O my Mother!
For the childhood hours that are far away,
Mother! O my Mother!
I have trod alone on a weary road,
And have gathered what my hands have sowed,
But you've not been there to ease the load—
Mother! O my Mother!

THERE is brown no more in your silvered hair,
Mother! O my Mother!
And your dear, sweet face is lined with care,
Mother! O my Mother!
I have made you worry and made you weep;
I have roamed the world and sailed the deep;
But back to your arms I fain would creep—
Mother! O my Mother!

I AM tired to death of the strain and stress,
Mother! O my Mother!
I am longing now for your soft caress,
Mother! O my Mother!
The plaudits of life are but froth and foam;
The world is wide to the hearts that roam;
Say you'll forgive me—I'm coming home!
Mother! O my Mother!

THERE are sins and scars I must bring with me,
Mother! O my Mother!
There's a look in my eyes that you should not see,
Mother! O my Mother!
But my heart is repentant, my spirit awed,
And your trust is deep, and your love is broad,
So I'm coming back to you—and God—
Mother! O my Mother!



By
George
*The Best Explanations
be Found in The*

Illustrations by

THE important discovery to be made by young people is that accidents happen—but not exactly at three o'clock every afternoon. If the blamed things keep on recurring with time-table regularity, stop calling them "accidents."

THIS whole proposition spread out in front of us may look like a lottery to someone who has just begun to warm up a seat in the grandstand, but the elderly rail-birds continue to clock the performers and get their real dope from the record of past performances.

THE main idea to be pushed over is that the bacon is seldom brought home by those who stumble over it. Usually it is acquired by those who have carefully specialized in the art of getting bacon. All of which is old stuff and good gospel but still denied in many quarters.

A GOOD many people in our neighborhood, including ourselves, get up in the morning and subconsciously pray that the Lord will make them lucky for twenty-four hours, instead of praying that He will make them get out and hustle for first prize. Forgetting that no man who wanted to be struck by lightning, just to get his name into the paper, ever felt a single volt travel down his spine. He can be struck by a truck if he so desires, but in that case he will not be changing the deadly laws of average. He will simply be impeding traffic.

JUST about so many persons are bitten by the cobra in India every year, and about so many have scenarios accepted in Hollywood, and the total of those who pick up pocketbooks and never find the owners will be just the same for 1923 as it was in 1922, so why become feverish when you are holding a 2000 to 1 ticket?

WE CONTINUE to mingle with golfers who play through the entire season believing that they have all of the tough luck. Therefore the game, instead of providing a sure reward for control of temper, concentration, relaxation and wise selection of weapons, becomes a scramble for gifts tossed down by the gods above, and these gods are always pulling for the stiff on the other team!

OF ALL the ruinous habits, the one that will corrode your insides most quickly is that of always stringing yourself into the belief that you are ninety-eight percent meritorious but have been outlucked by competitors. When the Alibi Brothers give a concert, supported by the Anvil Chorus, the principal number is, "I was entitled to all he got."



ADE

in the World are to **POORHOUSES**

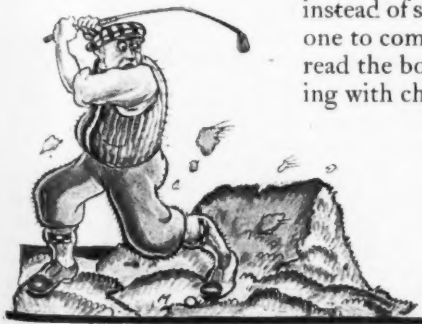
Gordon Ross

IT WAS only the other evening that Mrs. Horty Chylblane and Mr. Ernest Peevy got together at a reception and blue-penciled about half of the pages in "Who's Who." They agreed that Charlie Chaplin was not funny, and Arthur Brisbane did not know how to write editorials, and the Barrymores couldn't act, and somebody else must have told Henry Ford how to put it across. You know them. Nice people—their arteries surging with hot vinegar. From where they are sitting it looks as if everyone holding a bouquet got it through a crooked pull with Dame Fortune.

THEY can't, so they won't, admit that anyone else ever did. The cards may have been cut and there may be an outward semblance of regularity, but it is a misdeal just the same. The whole world is cut on the bias.

ANYONE who gets that kind of cross-eyed vision is really to be pitied, because he throws all of his charts overboard and waits for some favoring gale to blow him into port. To him the compass is merely a pin wheel and the North Star is a sky-rocket. Even after he is lolling on the sunny side of the poorhouse, waiting for his relatives to send him some smoking tobacco by parcel-post, he will explain to his associate paupers that, if he hadn't got a dirty deal, he would now be president of the bank which George Reynolds is trying to run in Chicago.

GRAYBEARDS, juggling millions or commanding the learned professions, are expected to break out with autobiographies just before breaking into the cemeteries. One who has been sitting at the head of the table for years need not be expected to give himself the worst of the mathematics when it comes to adding up. Each admits that he reached the peak by laborious climbing and a careful selection of routes, instead of sitting in the shade and waiting for someone to come along with an airplane. Those who read the books insist that there are suppressed chapters dealing with chance investments, fortunate marriages, hairbreadth escapes from disaster, etc. For many years the dice happened to hop just right for them. This sounds plausible to anyone but a crap-shooter.



UNDOUBTEDLY the juicy chapters of every autobiography somehow fail to get into the book, but, nevertheless, notwithstanding, why not admit, down in your heart of hearts, that even a Prominent Citizen may be right—at times?





The

*An
Extraordinary
Short
Story*

Unbroken Chain

IN THE year 1819 a string of twenty-one black slaves was passing along an African game trail bound for Mombasa. In this connection the word *string* advisedly is used. These twenty-one blacks were hitched in a tether, one after another, like a mess of fish on a stringer. Only, in the case of the fish the cord would have been threaded through the gills; this lot were yoked together.

They were chained, neck by neck. Each one of them wore an iron collar, clamped on. A four-foot length of iron chain, springing from this collar in front, teamed him with the fellow going before him; a similar chain joined him fast to the slave following next in order. This left his legs free for the march and his hands for carrying a burden—if one were given him to carry—or for scratching himself or for beating himself on the breast in lamentation for his captivity; yet in all respects held him well secured.

If there were any places of favor they belonged to the pair who traveled at the far ends of the leash. The file leader had no chain dragging under his chin but only a chain at his back. The one at the extreme rear likewise had to support just half the burden of metal which each of the nineteen intermediates bore.

The gang lived and ate and slept in their chain. At nighttime they lay down in a ring, their feet pointing to a common focus where a fire burned to keep off the leopards and the lions. By day they moved along to the accompaniment of a constant grating and clanking, each using his free hand, if he had one, to ease the pressure of the neck ring upon the base of his throat or where its rivets irked the top jointings of his chine behind. They were naked excepting for monkey skin breechclouts.

They were all adult males and therefore, in the eyes of their present proprietors, rather more to be prized than the run of a mixed assortment would have been. They were members of a tribe living well back in the country, in the foothills of the mountains; their tribal mark was the filing of their upper front teeth to sharp points. They had been taken in a night raid of the valorous Masai. Formerly they would have been massacred on the spot by the light of the blazing huts or reserved



for sacrificial torture on the return of the victors to their own village. But lately the Masai had found a more profitable if less congenial way for disposing of all able-bodied prisoners.

Now they bound them and brought them out to a place called Kilwa and lodged them in a barracoon. To this place the Arabs came up from the sea—and once in a while the Portuguese—and these exporters bargained with the Masai for their human spoils and carried them away. On this side of Africa the trade had not attained the proportions which made the trade on the Guinea Coast so enormously profitable. Indeed, on the Indian Ocean the traffic never amounted to a fifth of what it did where the Congo ran down to the Atlantic; but at this time it was growing fast—thanks to a steadily rising market and a steady



By
Irvin S.
Cobb

Illustrations

by

H. M. Stoops

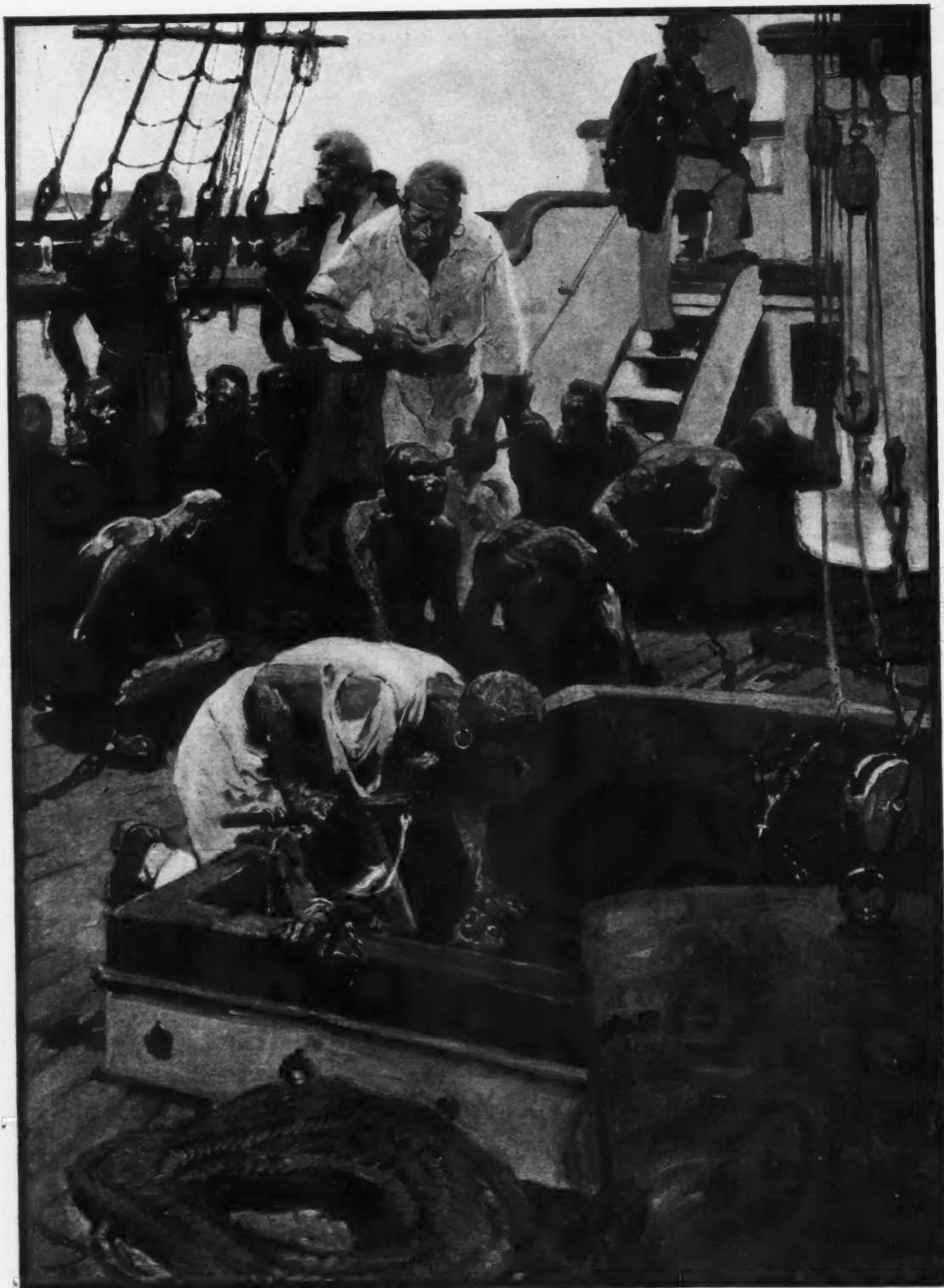
demand for prime and prize offerings in a certain part of the world, notably Persia and Turkey in the East, and Cuba, Brazil and the more southerly states of the new North American republic on the other side of the world.

This especial group of slaves was in herd to six Arabs who bore weapons for defense and heavy hippo-pelt whips for disciplining their purchases. If the subchief who strode on ahead to set the pace wished to halt the procession, he cut backward at the nearest pair of bare legs; if his squad sought to stimulate the troop to brisker speed, they made general play with their lashes on the limbs and bodies most convenient to them. Thus it was that without words the commands and the desires of the owners were made manifest to—and obeyed by—the newly bought.

In any tongue, or lacking any, a rawhide speaks a parable which the dullest wit may comprehend.

On a morning when the Arabs and their yoked commodities still were ten days from salt water, an adventure and a disaster befell the little caravan. On this day they were moving east by south across a high plateau. We who have never been there are accustomed to think of interior Africa as one great jungle, dark, miasmic, knotted with poisonous tropic growths. But here stretched a vast upland plain lying some thousands of feet above sea level. It was clothed in a rich pasturage through which game trails crossed and crisscrossed like the wrinkles in the palm of a washwoman's hand. It was parked with fine trees in an effect of studied and ordained landscaping. It was fairly well watered, and it literally rippled with game both great and small. Wild animals—and not so very wild, either, some of them—abounded in a plentitude which those of us who know only the temperate zones are accustomed to associate with our ideas of insect life in midsummer, but not with four-legged or with two-legged creatures. Where the antelope and zebra fed they filled the scope of the eye, multiplying themselves by thousands and uncountable thousands. When, taking panic from real or fancied dangers they fled to other grazing grounds, they streaked away interminably in a suggestion of driven rain slanting across the earth; and the noise of their hoofs made suitable thunder for the living storm-burst that they were.

At a point where the herbage grew rank and high a bull rhino charged the travelers. There were no elephants in this part; here the rhino was the largest of all the brutes as, indeed, next only to the elephant, he is the largest quadruped to be found anywhere in the world and, for his bulk and his swiftness and his malignant disposition, almost the most dreaded and the most dreadful. He may stand six feet and more at the shoulder, may, in the instance of a full-grown male specimen, weigh up to six thousand pounds—the strength of a three ton truck, the sheathing of an armored tank, the power and speed of a runaway switch engine; and with all this, the snout of a unicorn, the eyes of a mole, the brain of a very stupid boar pig,



Chained, the solitary survivor of the rhino's pettishness was stowed 'tween decks of a smart clipper ship.

but a scent and a hearing as keen as any and keener than most, and as quick on his feet, to check and to pivot, as a toe dancer.

The rhino which assailed the passing file was as big as they grew and as mean natured. Probably the sound made by the convoy as it drew near him—the *pat-pat* of naked feet padding upon the hard trodden path, the clangor of all that jouncing metal ware, perhaps the crack of a well aimed whiplash and the agonized screech of its mark as his flesh flinched and wealed under the stroke—was an irritation to him. From Cummings

28

and Speke on down to this present time the game hunters have told us that about the sulky bull rhino you never can be sure. He may take it into his horned and leathery head to run away from a single stalker, or in a sudden fit of purblind rage may elect to attack a whole *safari*. But whatsoever he takes it into his head to do, that he does, bulging straight ahead at a gait which is incredibly fast for a thing so lumbering and, while at rest, apparently so awkward. Forward on he rushes, an irresistible, crushing, ripping, rending projectile; vicious, fearless,

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devilish; seeming more a machine than a mammal, more the spectacle of a monstrous wound-up mechanism than an affair of blood and bones.

It was so with this particular rhino which on this particular bygone time charged down upon the slave squad. He heaved himself up into sight from a trampled wallow some two hundred yards distant, at the left-hand side of the trail, just as these invaders on the privacy of his bedchamber were abreast of him. He squealed once or twice, sniffed at the taint in the air, and then, lowering his front until the slobbery lower lip almost touched the earth, he came at right angles thundering down upon the travelers, uttering sharp, furious snorts that were like the blasts of a steam whistle as he came.

For the Arabs the tooted danger signal was ample. They scattered, leaping spraddle-legged into the high grass and making for some trees which rose near-by. From personal experience and from hearsay they knew that, once they cleared out of the direct way of the brute, he probably would not swerve from his course to pursue a single fugitive unless possibly the wind, blowing from one of them to him, informed his nose of what his poor eyes could not tell him. Even so, they veered off frantically toward the trees with intent to climb them.

Brief as the time was, the slaves likewise had full warning of what was upon them. All in a frenzied half-minute or so they did many futile, purposeless things. They gibbered and shrieked, they fought at their fetters, they dragged the line out to its full length, trying, all of them, to flee from the point of greatest peril; they huddled in together next, tangling themselves in the chains, then once more swung away from the common center, so that for an instant there was presented this tragic grotesquerie—it was like a figment from a nightmare—of ten joined black shapes straining to move in one direction and ten more striving to move in the opposite direction; but each batch, by its own crazed efforts, defeating the intent of the other; and in between, as the connecting link for this foolish and antic tug-of-war, a dancing and dangling puppet figure of a black man, his head half twisted off his shoulders, his distorted body writhing and shrinking, his toes lifted bodily off the earth, his eyes bulging from his skull as he glared full-face upon the misshapen deadly mass which bore him down.

The rhino struck this fairest of all possible targets a perfect bulls-eye, impaling it on the longer of his two horns. For an instant the Arabs, looking back from among the tree trunks, beheld an even more fantastical jape than the one of a moment before. In the middle space of their vision they saw the armed prow of the beast, with the spitted wretch held high up on the great head which now was upraised; and from this clumped apex there stretched out to right and left a slanted, rigid, V-formation—a prong forty feet long from tip to tip, formed on either plane of naked forms, ten this side and ten that, regularly spaced apart, the necks lengthened inordinately, the heads aiming all the same way, the poised taut bodies pulled straight out behind, the arms set and trailing aft, the legs drawn back horizontally and kept so by the might which had lifted and now carried them forward—for all the world like a flock of black geese in ordered geometric flight along the flanks of a swift craft that had shoved her bow into their alignment.

For the briefest of timable spaces this triangled phenomenon endured. Then the hurtling wedge lost shape, flapped down, folded in on itself and collapsed in the grass when the rhino, freeing his head of that which cumbered it, whirled about to slash and trample the confused litter underfoot and then was gone from sight, puffing out the last of his vented spleen as he vanished.

Cautiously the dispersed Arabs tracked back to the trail. The damage to them in property values was greater than they

feared it would be. Indeed, the loss well-nigh was a total loss. The middle slave practically was in bits; his breast was little more than a great hole, and where the gross brute, turning back, had side-swiped at him, the flesh was sheared away from his ribs like filets from a dressed cod; some such casualty as this they had expected, naturally. But from this chief victim's chain-mates they found the life gone, also. No hangman's noose ever had cracked a single spine more expeditiously than those iron necklets under that terrific jolt had cracked the spines of the hapless bondsmen. Broken-necked, they lay in the coil of their own heaped bodies.

At first look it seemed the entire twenty-one were jarred dead. But as it turned out there was an item for possible reclamation. A slave whose station had been at the extreme rear of the string was found to be breathing. His chest was battered and his chin torn and his shoulders were all roweled by the tough grass blades through which he had been ploughed and dragged; but his neck lay straight in its collar band, not twisted about as were the necks of the twenty; and soon he groaned and moved and threshed with his body.

His escape from the common fate might reasonably be accounted for. By virtue of his having been at the tail end of the tether, the colliding jerk which killed the rest had come to him from one way only—from in front; also, in the instant following the impact, there had been no pendent weight of dragged forms behind to help snap his vertebrae for him. Moreover, just before the rhino struck, he either had the wit to seize the chain in his two hands and hold it fast, with a few precious inches of slack between him and his grip, or else involuntarily he had done this. At any rate, it had been his salvation; his fingers still were cramped in the links. Under prodding he presently sat up.

He hardly seemed worth saving, though. He was idiotic from fright. He continued to tug at his coupling, trying to drag himself farther from the dead pile which anchored him. In his blubbing, bubbly speech repeatedly he shrieked out words which the Arabs took to be his name for a bull rhinoceros. Nevertheless, they elected to take him along with them; better a scrap of salvage from the calamity than none at all.

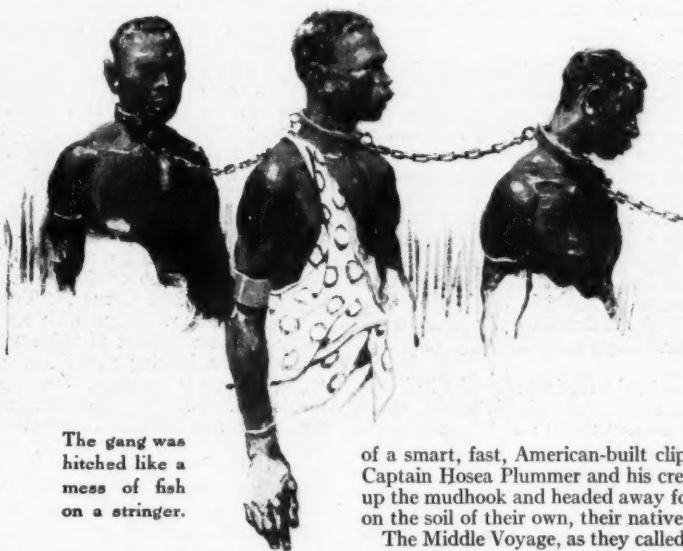
By a species of butchers' work which need not here be described, but it was done with knives and spear blades, they redeemed their hampered ironmongery and they lashed the jarred imbecile to his feet and resumed the interrupted trek, going now seven all told where before there had been twenty-seven. Since they traveled light they also traveled fast. That night they overtook at its camping place a larger convoy under command of their sheik and accompanied by a Portuguese factor. Having told their story they incorporated their remaining chattel with the main stock and drove him on down to

Mombasa. There a dhow took him and his new companions aboard and carried them to an appointed rendezvous offshore. Being young and able-bodied and in good case, save for his abiding fright, he was bartered at current rates to a lanky Yankee skipper who, at home in Maine, was a church deacon and a citizen walking in most mindful ways.

Chained now at wrist and ankle instead of neckwise, the solitary survivor of the rhino's pettishness was stowed, with sundry hundreds of his kind, in the 'tween decks

of a smart, fast, American-built clipper ship. This being done, Captain Hosea Plummer and his crew of good men and true had up the mudhook and headed away for a far distant place of entry on the soil of their own, their native land of freedom.

The Middle Voyage, as they called it then, was without mishap and with no more than the average percentage of mortality among the live freightage. Having successfully eluded the British and the American men-of-war which popularly were supposed to keep watch for such as he, the master in due time dropped anchor in a certain estuary well sheltered behind a certain island lying between Charleston and Savannah. Here he smuggled to shore his cargo—or what part of it had lived



The gang was hitched like a mess of fish on a stringer.



"There we sat penned up in the car, that cursed engine coming upon us. In a time like that things may

out the trip—and then, having dealt for cash with his consignees and with a fine jag of money in his pockets, went up the coast to the godly Down-East town of Portland for a period of vacation and sober thanksgiving.

For, mind you, Captain Hosea Plummer not only was a pious soul but he was a grateful one.

In the year 1920 a Mr. G. Claybourne Brissot was living the life of a gentleman in retirement near Smithtown, Long Island. He was known to be by birth a Southerner, but he spoke with scarcely a trace of a Southern accent. Judging by his speaking voice, you would have said he came of some cultured New England stock; only when he spoke rapidly or under stress did there slur into his tone a suggestion—a trace, as a chemist might say—of the softening of the consonant *r* and the slovenly treatment of the final *g*. This, though, might easily be accounted for. It would appear that in his early youth he had been sent North to be educated. Up here he had been tutored; later he went through Harvard and thereafter remained in the North, living first for a while in New York City and now on this estate which he owned north of Smithtown village, on a site half a mile back from the Sound.

He seemed to have no ties in the section where he had been born. He never visited the South although his wealth, which was considerable, had been created there; and he rarely spoke of it. Nor did he make mention, ever, of any kinspeople, living or dead, that he might have down there. He did not belong to the Southern Society in New York or to any of the state societies. It was almost inevitable that as a child he must have had black playfellows or, at the least, a black nurse, but in his household staff there were no negroes whatsoever; a rather unusual thing when you remember that most transplanted Southerners like to have colored domestics about them. His valet was a Frenchman, his cook an Armenian—Mr. Brissot favored his foods highly spiced and well oiled—his chauffeur a second generation Italian, his head gardener a Scot, and his maidservants usually were Irish girls or Swedish.

He lived very much to himself; really, you might call him a recluse. When he traveled he traveled alone excepting that he took his valet and occasionally his chauffeur. I mean to say he had no traveling companion of his own sort. He knew Europe thoroughly and especially southern Europe, where he had motored extensively, but of his own country all he now saw was a narrow strip along the Eastern seaboard.

As a young man he had married, but it would appear that within a year or two after his marriage he and his wife, who since was dead, had separated and thereafter had lived apart. There had been one child and, according to a more or less vague hearsay, the child still lived, although the father was not known ever to have spoken of it. By one report, the child had been born with a deformity on it or a blemish of some sort and had been put away elsewhere by the father. This was only gossip; proofs to back it were lacking.

Mr. Brissot was not a member of any club. Apparently he had no intimate, no confidante whatsoever, unless his lawyer in New York, Mr. Cyrus H. Tyree, might be termed such. The acquaintance he had with his neighbors on Long Island, many of them persons of refinement and property, was little more than a bowing acquaintance. Not one, speaking with truth, could say he was a friend to this reserved and secluded gentleman. For such associates as he had he mainly preferred foreigners, and notably Frenchmen. Once in a while he had some visiting foreigner for his guest. Otherwise he did no entertaining; accepting very few invitations and extending practically none at all. Perhaps the typical educated Frenchman's tolerance, his racial freedom from so many of the prejudices which bind so many of us—perhaps these appealed to him. Or perhaps his preference might be explained on the ground—since he had a French name and presumably was, on one side at least, of Latin descent—that some handed-down sentiment in his nature inclined him to seek the company of men of a Latin strain.

He loved music, being himself a fair pianist and better than a fair singer. In his singing and his playing invariably he



pass in a flash—but you see them all and if you live through it you remember them afterwards."

avored French and German and Italian music. For our native folk songs and for our more ambitious work he seemed not to care at all. As for the rest, he was a plump man of middle age and medium height, with straight, dark hair, rather sensitive features, brooding brown eyes and an aloof, almost a shrinking manner. It was as though, having a distinct personality of his own, he nevertheless strove to subdue it, to hide it away from people as he hid himself away. Always he wore plain, dark, well cut garb, but always, too, he wore a bright colored necktie and on his fingers heavy jeweled rings; and these stipplings of florid color, taken with his otherwise somber garments and his air, seemed oddly out of place.

Naturally, Mr. Brissot was an object of interest to his neighbors. People discussed him in the terms of a mild and restrained curiosity; they wondered about him; some probably built up mythical and more or less fantastic theories of their own to account for him and his ways. So there was a distinct stir of polite surprise one afternoon when he came to an amateur race meet on a private half-mile track at the Blackburn estate, which adjoined his own.

Staying at the Blackburn place at this time was Judge Martin Sylvester, who before his elevation to the Federal bench had been a member of the lower house of Congress and before that lieutenant-governor of one of the South Atlantic states. That same night, meaning by that the night following the racing, Mr. George Blackburn sat with his distinguished visitor on the terrace of the house overlooking the Sound. It was after midnight; the other members of the household had gone off to bed. The two men, both of them elderly, were having the last of a last smoke before they turned in. There befell between them one of those small silences which come sometimes when a pair of men in excellent accord with each other and reasonably well content smoke good cigars together. It was the guest who broke the spell of it.

"Blackburn," he said, "what's the greatest tragedy, almost, that our American civilization has to offer?" Without pausing he went on, answering his own question: "I'm going to tell you

what I think it is. I think that about the cruelest tragedy we've got in this country today is the man with a tincture of negro blood in his veins—the infinitesimal trace which according to our laws of consanguinity nevertheless brands him a negro—and who still has education, good taste, refinement, even may have in him sometimes the seed of genius which makes him an artist or a creator. But in our national scheme of things, North or South, there's no place for him at all.

"Life must be hell for such a man—it's bound to be. Think of it—he goes through his days despising his enforced contact with the run of his own race—the race to which we arbitrarily and, as I hold, properly, assign him—and yet denied association on equal terms with white people of his own cultural rating. Oh, yes, yes, I know you Northerners sometimes make a pretense of according him companionship of a sort, but it's only a pretense—a shadow and not the substance of the social equality for which he must crave, world without end. Mind you, I'm not arguing in favor of any other convention for treating him. I have the orthodox convictions of an orthodox Southerner—prejudices you'd call 'em, some of 'em—but even so I can't help from seeing the pitiable side of it.

"And the most pitiable part of it is that there's nothing he can do or you or I can do, or would do, to better things for him. We've got to keep our own stock clean and undefiled if we can—got to sacrifice the exceptional individual for the sake of ourselves and our race. One drop of black ink in a pint of clear water discolors the whole cupful—the stain goes all the way through from top to bottom. That's true in chemistry; it's true in biology; true of all creation and all procreation. And you can't get away from it. You can't buck against the everlasting laws. You're only a fool and a criminal if you try. But that don't keep you from being sorry sometimes, does it?

"I can think of just one other tragedy to equal it—a kindred tragedy, this is, and maybe it's a greater one. And that's the case of a man who, let us say, has in him only a sixteenth or a thirty-second or even a sixty-fourth degree of the negro admixture, a man who passes for a pure Caucasian, who

goes unsuspected and yet must go always with a curse hanging over him—the curse of the fear that some day, somehow, somewhere, some word from him, some involuntary spasmodic act of his, some throw-back manifestation of motive or thought that's been hiding in his breed for generation after generation, will betray his secret and utterly undo him. Call it by what scientific jargon or popular term you please—hereditary instinct, reversion to type, transmitted impulse, dormant primitivism, elemental recurrence—still the haunting dread of it must be walking with him in every waking minute. It must be there always, poisoning his thoughts and warping his nature. Ugh!"

"Say, Judge," asked Blackburn, "conceded that all you say is true—and I guess it is, every word—what on earth set you off at that unhappy tangent upon such a night as this?"

"Oh, I don't know," said the Southerner. He laughed a cryptic little laugh. "The moonlight, I reckon. It's the sort of moon which Private John Allen of Mississippi liked to say we used to have down South before the War. It's set me to thinking of things I've seen and heard down in my country—distressing things mainly. Now, I remember once—" He broke off, considering his shriveled peak of cigar ash as though this were a thing immensely important.

Presently he spoke again, making his tone casual: "Blackburn, this next door neighbor of yours—this Mr. Brissot who was over here this afternoon for a little while—he interested me."

"He must have—judging by the questions you've been asking about him ever since he left. Well, there's not much I can tell you that I haven't already told you, and that's precious little; Brissot is by way of being our one small neighborhood mystery. He's a puzzle to you, I take it. Well, I'm not surprised at that—he's been a puzzle to us these last four or five years since he moved in."

"Yes," said the Judge, "he is a puzzle. Or, at any rate, I'd say he was a rarity. I only saw him for a few minutes—only talked with him a few minutes, I mean—but I've had him on my mind ever since. There were certain things about the man—" Again he left a sentence unfinished before it was well begun. For his next words he lowered his voice and before uttering them glanced behind him as though to make sure no servant was within hearing.

"Blackburn, I might as well get it off my chest. But remember what I'm going to say is said in the strictest confidence—on the square." He stressed the last word with a special intonation.

"I get you," said his host, putting the same ritualistic emphasis into his answer. "We're in Lodge; the door's locked and the Tyler on guard. But why all this secrecy?"

"Because, lacking proof, I commit an indiscretion when I even hint at what's been working inside my brain. It's the sort of thing that a man down my way doesn't dare whisper unless he's prepared, in case of a show-down, to back up his insinuation with sworn evidence or a gun or both. Even then compassion might make him hesitate. But that's enough for a preamble. I reckon we understand each other."

"Now, this Mr. Brissot—while we were being introduced I felt sort of drawn to him. Some way, in all that big crowd of fine, clever, kindly people, he seemed so terribly alone. And when you happened to mention that he also was from the South, I decided right off that at least we'd have one congenial topic to talk over together—one thing in common. But, as it turned out, we didn't. Because when I spoke of families and said I had a sister-in-law whose mother had been a Claybourne—you remember you called him by his full name in introducing us—he shied away from the subject like a galled colt that's been flicked on a raw place. And he didn't have any state pride about him, either—not a particle—and that's a blamed peculiar thing, too, in a Southerner born."

"To have been born in certain states of this union is an incident. But to have been born in certain others is, to the man who was born there, a profession. Take a man, let's say, from Ohio. Unless he happens to be a Republican candidate for President he makes no capital out of the circumstance that his parents chose to set up housekeeping in Ohio instead of Illinois or Iowa or Michigan. Ask him where he was born and he says

'Ohio,' like that, and lets it go at that. But it's apt to be different with a man who hailed originally from Indiana or with one from California—being a Native Son is a thing for him to advertise—and to a degree the same thing applies up here in the North, to a Massachusetts man, if he came from Boston, or to a Philadelphian or to one of your old Knickerbocker line in New York."

"As for the South—well, go anywhere below Mason and Dixon's Line and see what happens. Especially you take a Virginian or a Marylander or a Kentuckian or a Louisiana man or a Carolinian—above all, a South Carolinian. He may be modest enough in most regards but just mention his home state and he'll start bragging as though a special virtue resided in it and a special virtue in him for having had the forethought and the good taste to have been born there. He never forgets it and he's not likely to let you forget it, either. Ninety-nine times out of a hundred, family means a lot to him. Probably he had a Confederate daddy or a Revolutionary great-granddaddy that he's proud of. Or maybe an ambassador for a cousin or somebody for a great-uncle who was in Buchanan's cabinet."

"I know how it is because I'm a victim of the habit myself. I come from a stock that boasts the loudest. One of my grandfathers came from Richmond and my mother was a Charleston woman—born in one of those old houses down on the Battery, a house that has been in her family for more than a hundred years. See there—I'm beginning to take credit to myself for my forebears even while I'm describing how the other fellow behaves. It's in us—we just naturally can't get away from it."

"But your hermit friend over here next door—why, he actually flinched when I tried to talk family with him. And yet, if his name counts for anything, he's of that old Huguenot stock down there in the tidewater country who're vainer than Lucifer of their breed—vainer even, as a rule, than the rest of us are. Funny—very funny! It's as though he had something to conceal, as if—well, what would you say about it yourself?"

"But surely just because of that you wouldn't suspect the—the other thing?" said Blackburn. "The man is sallow, I admit—dark-skinned, in fact, but—"

"That has nothing to do with it," said Judge Sylvester. "In my time I've known a hundred men of the so-called Nordic strain—clean-bred Anglo-Saxon or straight Celtic—who were darker by ten shades than he is. I'm right smart of a brunette myself, if it comes to that, or anyhow I used to be before my hair turned white. And his fingernails would pass muster—I looked closely at them, and the little half-moons at their bases were as clear as yours are or mine—no suggestion there of the tell-tale dark blush that's like a bruise. Nor any chalk, as we say, in his eye-balls, either; they had the right bluish white cast. But as he turned away from me—I was studying him closely—I don't know why, but I was—there suddenly came into his face as I saw it in profile a sort of—well, I won't say a cast; I don't know how to put it in words—but a something or other as if another face under the skin were fitting itself into the contour of his face, a face that—oh, thunder, I can't express it and yet I sensed it, felt it, recognized it intuitively! I don't want to be morbid but just to

satisfy my own curiosity I'd certainly like to have a look at the man stripped."

"Why stripped, of all things in the world?"

"I'll tell you why—it's the final test for the negroid smudge. Or at least that's what the people down in my country all firmly believe. I don't know what ethnologists would say about it, but we believe that if a human being has in him the smallest possible tincture of African blood it will reveal itself in a sort of stain or streak or smear right down the middle of his back. The eyes, the nails, the arches of the insteps—they may all be above suspicion; the features may be as Caucasian as George Washington's were, or Lord Byron's—but along the line of the spine, thicker and darker at the base of the column and growing fainter and lighter as the vertebrae grow smaller at the top, where the nape is, will run that faint unmistakable smear that's like the stroke of a tar brush. Like a stroke of the Tar Brush—to put it brutally!"

"I repeat—I don't want to be morbid, (Continued on page 122)

Mr. Cobb

Presents
Next Month

The Silent Partner

which is the story of
a talkative man

By Stephen

Vincent Benét



The

Garbageman's Daughter

Illustrations by
Harrison
Fisher

IT IS a pity that the old free and easy ballad style has somewhat gone out of fashion in modern verse. It would have suited the beginning of this narrative so well.

Lord Ronald rode by on his milk-white steed,
He was a goodly knight!
The garbageman's young daughter
Looked on him with delight.

Of course it could be done in free verse.

Horsehoofs ironic thud
or a *Sht*
the virgin
gazes
eddy of clashing eyes
through an
odor
Ouch!

But the latter rendering seems to lack a certain tonal vibrance, as Culture Clubs say.

Besides, the story begins in the days when, if children under ten mentioned their sex-consciousness at table, they had their

mouths washed out with soap and water. Perhaps it would be better to stick to prose.

The garbageman's young daughter, then, was in her front yard, engaged in a passable imitation of her father's occupation, involving tin cans, a broken down toy wagon, fallen leaves and a great deal of anonymous dirt. Her name was Carlotta Benedetti and she was eight years old. She was not a pretty child, except for her large, dark eyes, for she was both skinny and sallow, and the liberal application of dirt to all visible parts of her anatomy gave her neither rustic charm nor pathetic appeal. She looked what she was, a grubby, healthy little animal, at present completely happy in messing about.

In these days of realtors and morticians her father would probably be called a Contractor Engaged in the Disposal of Waste Material. In 1910 he was merely Joe, the local garbageman of Sundale. He had started in Sundale as an odd-job man—clipping hedges and doing bits of gardening—and for a while he and Anna his wife and their five children had, to all appearances, subsisted entirely on spaghetti and garlic, while everybody of any respectability said that it was really a shame the way those Italians lived, and the poor children. But he

The Garbageman's Daughter

had prospered exceedingly, and now not only had the garbage contract for the suburb but a little frame house with a tiny truck garden adjacent and a pig sty that was very adjacent indeed. In fact, he had done so well that he was thinking of writing his three brothers, his uncles and all his cousins to come over from Italy next summer and do likewise.

The only thing that troubled him, at times, was a certain shortage of man power in his family. True, there were four sons and Carlotta, but there should have been four more children as well. The others had succumbed to various vicissitudes in their early years, and, as he was wont to remark, "That make work for Anna." But Anna was still hearty enough to do the work of three New England hired men most of the time—so things might have been worse.

So we have Carlotta's background—grimy, perhaps, but industrious. Or enough of it to show you that she was not an idle girl.

Carlotta admired and was slightly scornful of her parents in about equal degrees. She had an extensive knowledge of American slang, a passionate desire for ice cream soda and silk stockings, and not the slightest wish to return to the Old Country. She may develop into anything from a new Gilda Gray to an economics professor—we shall see.

What she saw at the precise moment when she deposited a new load of rubbish on the little dump she had made, with an expert, clanging rattle of cans that displayed how well developed the imitative faculties of children are, was a Vision. A Vision that, in spite of certain Amazon proclivities of hers, stirred inarticulate but pleasant vibrations within her consciousness.

The Vision consisted of a small boy in a white sailor suit—a boy about her own age—a boy who, according to her standards, seemed almost impossibly clean and neat. His mother would have thought him extremely grimy, but that is beside the question. To Carlotta he seemed a prince—a prince strongly reminiscent of the wax statue of the infant St. John in the church she attended—so far her perfect exemplar of masculine beauty.

And he had the trappings and appurtenances of a prince as well—for he was proceeding down the sidewalk in wide swooping curves at the wheel of a toy automobile which he pedaled furiously along with his feet. In that day, in Sundale, almost any sort of an automobile was a dating luxury. A toy one stamped its possessor as a kind of infant Gould.

She watched his magnificent progress breathlessly, dragging her battered wagon out to the sidewalk behind her. The wagon tongue slipped from her fingers—the wagon rolled directly in

the Vision's path—for a moment collision threatened. He braked himself—stopped abruptly.

"Say, whatcha think you're doin'?" said the Vision angrily. "Blocking up the sidewalk so a man can't pass!"

"I guess I got as much right on this sidewalk as you got!" replied Carlotta at once. "I guess it's my papa's sidewalk, anyway—not your ole sidewalk! I guess—"

"I guess you're pretty fresh!" said the boy dispassionately. "I guess you don't know ole trucks aren't allowed on sidewalks!" He pointed a scornful finger at the wagon.

"Well, how about your old truck?" said Carlotta, unsubdued. "Huh, smarty?"

"S pleasure car"—with crushing emphasis. "Modern, model runabout with detachable lamps!"

"Huh!" said Carlotta faintly. She was impressed. "How much did it cost?"

"Dunno," said the boy, with a careless, wealthy gesture. "Got it for Christmas. Fifty dollars, maybe. Or a hunderd dollars."

"Huh!" said Carlotta, with envy and respect. "It isn't so bum."

"You're darn right it isn't so bum! Detachable lamps 'n' everything! Wanna try it?"

"Dunno," said Carlotta wistfully, standing on one leg.

"Ah, come along, cowardy cus-tard!" Her cheeks blazed.

"All right. You get out."

"Well, now, be careful—ah, gee, don't do it like *that*! Like *this*!" He demonstrated.

Carlotta saw at once. But she kept him demonstrating. Her feminine instincts were singularly well developed—for eight.

"Don't wobble the wheel!" Carlotta wobbled it frightfully.

After a while he tired of playing instructor.

"Say, Carlotta, what were you doing when I came along?"

Their friendship had ripened. His name was Ronald Bruce and he was descended from Robert Bruce. She had never heard of Robert, but she knew the Bruces. Her father collected from them—they had the big white house on the hill.

"Playing garbageman," Carlotta offered diffidently. "Papa's the garbageman."

"Oh, is your pop the garbageman? Why, we know *him*! Say, how were you playing it, anyway?"

Ronald proved a help as assistant garbageman. Soon he was very nearly as dirty as Carlotta herself.

Their pleasant duties were suddenly interrupted by a sneering voice. "Oh, sis-sy!" it called out.

An excessively freckled, excessively red-haired boy was leaning on the fence. He was larger than Ronald. He had an unpleasant smile.

"That's Micky Kelly," said Carlotta briefly. "Don't you pay no attention to him at all. He's mean."

"Oh sis-sy—sis-sy—making mud pies with a girl!"

"Who you callin' sissy?" Ronald straightened up.

"What a pretty little ottomobile—for a sis-sy!" The big boy was cramping himself into the seat of Ronald's car.

"Hey—stop!" and "Micky Kelly, you leave that alone!"



"How!" Mr. Winterbottom said laconically.



The lovers plucked up courage to meet in Carlotta's home occasionally, where her father discovered them one afternoon.

"Ta-ta!" said young Mr. Kelly and, waving a derisive hand, started pedaling away. But his legs, unfortunately, were too long for the instant execution of his evil purpose. They interfered with each other—and in the moment Ronald and Carlotta were upon him.

After the dust of battle had cleared away and Micky Kelly had fled roaring down the street, Ronald regarded his ally appreciatively through eyes already beginning to puff and blacken.

"You shouldn't 'a' done it," he said. "I coulda fixed him. But gee, you can scrap! And swear!"

Carlotta felt pleased.

"You can scrap pretty well yourself!" she said generously.

They regarded each other in a friendly silence. Then Ronald's eyes happened to fall upon the lengthening shadows that lay across the yard now, wavering and long. He whistled.

"Say, I gotta get back. Say—come along—our cook's been making doughnuts for supper."

"We-e-el—" said Carlotta, entranced.

The grubby companions had hardly reached the porch of the big white house that Carlotta had always regarded with reverent eyes from the road, when they were pounced upon. An elegant lady, dressed in what, to Carlotta's mind, were the swellest rags conceivable, greeted their approach with a squeak of horror.

"Ron-ald! Where have you been? Why, you're—fil-thy! And what have you brought home?" (Continued on page 151)



The Wife

THE WIND had a long whizz to it. *Zeouw!* It raced around corners so that it struck Molla Ivanü broadside and jerked her breath away. It rose up under her hat and set it on end like a plate on a juggler's brow. It sent up spiral snow ghosts in front of her and blew flurries of them into her mouth. It caught at her skirts and tore up under, chapping her knees. It tweaked her ears until the lobes were red and swollen and shiny. *Zeouw!*

She was winded and twisted and her carpet bag hooked into burningly cold fingers when she finally staggered into a drug store. There was a pot-bellied stove with an iron fence around it. Her flesh began to sing. She cupped her hands against the warm sheet iron fence. All ten of her fingers, little bells ringing.

The chemist glanced up and shrugged softly.

"Worst blizzard in ten years."

"Yes," she said, with her mouth full of the chattering dice of her teeth.

"Where you going? Traveling? You won't get a train out of this town today. Worst tie-up in ten years."

"No. No. I got to go down to Front Street, where I got a aunt."

"Front Street? Docks, huh? You have as much chance getting down to Front Street as a duck has of swimming through snowdrifts."

"I got to go," she said.

He looked at her over his glasses. He had a Yankee face with a kick-up of beard.

"Where are you going, back to the old country?"

"Back? I've never been."

"Ain't you a Finn or something? You look about as foreign to me as a samovar. Got some foreign streaks in you, I'll wager."

"Many—but I don't know—all mixed up—"

"Melting pot—eh? Well, it's a bad morning to have going anywhere on your mind. Worst in ten years."

"I'm yoost changing places."

"Oh—housework?"

"Cook, mostly."

"Who's firing a good hefty girl like you on such a morning?"

"Not fired. I got references."

"Say, I have a customer over on Fifty-eighth Street needs a cook—worst way!

7 Candles

Small family. Good wages. I'm putting up these aromatic spirits now for the old woman. You might take it over for me and size up the place. Want the address? Good folks—"

"If you will please be so good—"

He ran his tongue over a label, smacking it on to the bottle. "No slip-ups on the way over. I'm taking a chance on you. My delivery boy wouldn't miss the chance of staying away for a snowstorm like this if he lived upstairs. Here's the name and address."

She took the slip with her thick, numbed fingers.

"Pal-es-tine—"

"Just around the corner. Tell them I sent you. He's the owner of the Sample Shoe Store on Thirty-fourth Street. You're a nice girl. They'll be lucky to get you. Wish I could afford you for the wife. Don't forget the package. It's spirits of ammonia for the old mother."

She picked up her bag and went out.

The wind met her with a swoop and a yell—standing her hat again up on end.

She bent into it, baring her teeth with the effort.

The Palestines lived on the fifth floor. Their living room overlooked the heads of the buildings opposite and took in a fleeting view of Central Park. A showy room of velour hangings with tassels. A handsome baby grand piano and a lamp with an openwork brass shade. Paintings in shadow boxes, and incongruously enough, to fill in the narrow panel of wall between the mantelpiece and door, a few Japanese prints which Mr. Palestine had once been obliged to take over as part payment of a bad account. Cool and thin with the fine calligraphy of a minute and apparently emotionless art. Molla Ivanü liked to dust their impassiveness.

Evenings, when there was not a poker party around the dining room table, the Palestines lounged about this room in loose unexcited attitudes. Mr. Palestine reading the paper and yawning enormously with protracted shudders as he turned the pages. He was a tall, heavy-set fellow with very black hair parted down the center and set on to his head squarely, like a toupee. His small straight mustache with the ends waxed up enhanced this squareness.

Mrs. Palestine, on these evenings when there was no poker game, uncorseted herself immediately after the evening meal, the soft white flesh running down the hill of her body. She was very blonde and wore her hair in elaborate tier upon tier of puffs. These puffs, made in rows of three, four and five, like hot buns, littered the house.



The Mother

By
Fannie Hurst

Illustrations by
Denman Fink

Whenever old Mrs. Palestine found one she picked it up gingerly as if it were a mouse by the tail and handed it in a scathing kind of silence to her daughter-in-law. "Pfu!" was how she felt about most things pertaining to her son's wife. But she sat, too, in the living room with the pair of them after dinner. There was an arch of shadow where the lamplight did not reach. Old Mrs. Palestine liked to sit back in that, idle and brooding and with dry old eyes like prunes.

She had to have a hassock because her feet did not touch the floor. Young Mrs. Palestine had a way of kicking the hassock savagely when her mother-in-law was not about, gritting her teeth with pain at her stubbed toes and taking a fierce kind of delight in that pain, and then kicking it again and again with her fancy tipped shoes.

Young Mrs. Palestine's shoes were eloquent. They were short-vamped, florid, and even after one wearing apt to tippie a little of run-over heels. Old Mrs. Palestine wore square-toed black bluchers with rubber insets, which she polished herself every morning and set out on the fire escape outside Molla's window to dry. Her son, who was inclined to bunions, wore square toes too, but with the additional flourish of spats with the green or ruby of vivid hose above them.

Underneath the dining room table, their respective feet spoke volumes. The polished orthodox ones of old Mrs. Palestine on their hassock. The short-vamp champagne ones with the run-down heels. Palestine's rather stolid ones between the two.

Difficult, nervous meals of three kinds of silences. An old lady's aching one. A young woman's high-tensioned one. Palestine's tired one.

Sometimes it seemed to Molla Ivanü that the dining room of golden oak and swell of elaborate sideboard was filled with a gale of this silence, like one of those terrific arctic windstorms that old sea dogs dread because the water, in horrible phenomena, lies like glass under the gale, too wind-beaten to lift a wave.

"Pass me the butter, Pal." Scarcely the phraseology to rock empires. "Pass me the butter, Pal"; and yet when May Palestine said it, old Mrs. Palestine, whose skin was sapless at best, could seem to shrivel into the ancient parchment of the Torah.

She kept kosher. Valiantly. The forbidden combination of meat and butter might desecrate her daughter-in-law's board, but not the spirit nor the palate of the old lady. At her end of the table the sacred rituals of the "meat dishes" and "milk dishes" remained unviolated. There was a shelf in the kitchen, especially contrived by her son, for the kosher utensils, and a two burner gas stove in the corner for the personal and private preparation of her orthodox foods.

May hated that stove and the little whisper of garlic that hung over it. "Makes me sick to my stummick to walk into my own kitchen," was one



The Son

of her sotto voces. "I'm Episcopalian, but I'd like to see myself frying myself Episcopalian pork chops. Good to their stummicks! Oh Lord! *Kosher* is another word for stummick love."

And Molla, hearing, would clatter pans and turn on the spigot for the plunge of water into the sink, because sometimes the undertones percolated to the old woman's dim ears and then she would have one of her smothering spells or sinking fits, and spirits of ammonia would have to be administered. On one occasion Mr. Palestine, in the midst of a Monday marked-down sale of Oxford ties, had to be sent for, and all through the rush hours was obliged to sit alternating between holding his mother's hand

in her darkened bedroom or pacifying his wife, who invariably expressed her frenzy by throwing articles of clothing into a traveling bag and then strewing them all out again.

"No. I won't be the one to go. Why should I? That's just what she's laying for, to break up this house. But she won't! She won't! Not while my dress buttons up the back with tiddlewinks!"

The last was a favorite aphorism of Mrs. Palestine. You could hear it from the poker table.

"I'll raise you two bones. You can't bluff me. Not while my dress buttons up the back with tiddlewinks."

A festive, painted phrase like the little pagoda all lantern-hung in one of the Japanese prints. Molla Ivanü liked it. Button up the back like tiddlewinks! It made Molla feel gay somehow just to repeat it to herself.

But generally there was little enough to feel gay about at the Palestines' with May and her tantrums so quick on the trigger or the broody old woman who on Friday evenings would light the candles in her room and keep open her door so that the sound of her weeping came in little bleatings down the hallway.



The Servant

"She's putting on, putting on," May would singsong as she lolled *en déshabille* in the living room. She had a perpetually hoarse voice, full of fog. "When I feel like having a good cry, I go in my room and shut the door, and Lord knows there's enough reasons around here for having a good cry. Evening's diversion. Lord, how they love to cry! It's a wonder there's not an Atlantic Ocean somewhere made up of noisy kosher tears."

"I wish you'd leave my mother out of your gab, May."

"Oh, you do, do you? Well then, I wish she'd leave her gab out of my business!"

"Between you and your rows, you two women are driving me plumb raving crazy. At least if I was the youngest I'd give in to an old woman—an old tired woman like my mother with only a few years left to live. I'd humor her, May. Honest I would."

"Few years! Long enough to ruin my home for six years! Few years! With her digestion for the greasy meals she eats, she stands a good chance of ruining it for many years to come."

"May, you can't change a leopard's spots. My mother's old and she's grieving herself to death over things you're too young to understand. She likes you, May."

"A lot I care if she likes me or not. Nobody could live in the house with her. The dusting don't suit and the cooking don't suit and the poker parties don't suit and the number of petticoats I have in the wash don't suit. Molla is the first servant we've ever been able to keep in the same house with your mother, and if that hunk is human I'll button my dress up the back with tiddlewinks . . ."

"She's the best servant we ever had."

"Yes, but nobody but a great cream-colored elephant like her would stand for the old woman's butting in. She's got a hide not even your mother can break through. That's the way to be. Tough, so that they can stick things in you and you don't feel 'em. I'm sensitive. That's me. High-strung. I can't stand no yammering old hex in my affairs, and not get the pollywog jimjams."

"You eat those words that you just called my mother!"

"Eat 'em? I'll spit 'em out, you mean! Hex—that's what she is."

"By—"

"All right, hit me! Hit me! Lot I care—go in there and cry some kosher tears with her—I can't help it because your father died—I can't help it because garlic makes me sick to my stomach—I can't help it because a penny don't look the size of a sunrise to me. Hit me—hit me—but if you do—there'll be the greatest little smash-up around here this happy home has ever known. Hit me—I'd like to see you try it, sheenie!"

"You—"

"Ah—ow—"

Then to Molla, shuddering in the kitchen, the tormented frenzied tumble of him down the hallway, the slam into his room, and presently the violent sickness which these scenes never failed to induce in him.

Silence, with May lying swollen and wet-mouthed on the couch and the bleating from the old woman's room whimpering down into sobs.

Virtually, it was Molla who put the family to bed—additional blankets to be laid out, pillows fluffed. The hot water bag for the old woman's chilled spine. Ice for Palestine to suck. Spirits of camphor for the threat of fever sore on May's lips.

Yes, generally there was little enough to be glad about at the Palestines'.

In spring Molla wheeled the old lady out in her rolling chair. She had a hip bone complaint, and except in the house she seldom walked.

Molla liked wheeling her out in the spring. Usually she trundled her directly to the Park.

There was a tree there beside the lake with the swan boats on it that in April popped out in a delicate rash of leaves. It was down eight steps hewn out of natural rock and there was a bench beside the water.

Long, sedative afternoons with the old woman droning into them, and Molla, her hand joggling the chair as if it were a perambulator, watching the light bend around the lake. In repose, the look of tightness would seem to ease up in Mrs. Palestine's face like the flesh of a prune that has been dropped in water. The flesh softened up a bit and smooth little areas in her cheeks sprang out that usually looked sucked in.

Faces like hers, strong-skinned, high-boned, and the eyes a little fanatical with love, had kept the storm-blown flames of the seven-branch candlestick burning down through the ages.

When Mrs. Palestine wept for her son she wept for Israel, and that is why her eyes could sometimes seem dry as salt beds with bitter residuum.

Often, talking through the quiet afternoon, her lips would try to shape themselves for words too heart-twisting for her to speak, and so she would cry them, her mouth writhing back from the gums. "My boy. I don't care, Molla, so much that she has stolen him from me—every mother who loses a son to a wife must learn such pain—but, Molla—she's stolen him from his faith. Ain't that an awful pain, Molla, to have a son stolen like a baby from his cradle out of his religion? Away from his God to hers"

Here was that God business again. Why was Mrs. Palestine's God a better God than May's God? Why was not the God who made May the same God who made Mrs. Palestine? All this wrangling over your God and my God. May Palestine went out on Saint days to visit hers. Mrs. Palestine burned candles and kept her tongue free of the salt of swine in His name. One God, and yet all struggling over Him. Tearing Him to pieces and setting up each his shred. Mrs. Palestine refuting May's Shred for her Shred. Your Shred. My Shred. Yet all torn off the divinely bleeding and omnipotent form.

"A boy who was raised in such a home like his should go out of it to another religion! Not a Friday night in his life that he didn't see his papa and me light the candles for our *Shabbas*. I'm afraid to die. I'm afraid to die and leave him to face her God. I—Molla—Molla—an old woman like me—tired—tired—my husband waiting—my home broke up—my life a misery—so ready to go—afraid to die—afraid to leave my boy and go meet my husband."

Silently then Molla would jounce the handle of the chair.

"She's not right for him, Molla. How I prayed with him that night he came home from the dance hall where he met her, he should not go to such places—even before I knew where it would lead to. She ain't a helpful wife, Molla—like I was to mine. I stinted. She spends. I mended and washed and ironed. She plays poker and eats all day, chocolates. My boy works on his feet fifteen hours and she spends it faster as he can earn it. I can't stand to see it she should spend for manicures, money what it has hurt my boy to stand all day on his bunions to earn. He don't know it yet—he's in love. It ain't nice to say it—he's in love with her body. No man can change his God for a woman's body—and have it last. She ain't the wife for him. I can't sit by and see it—can't—can't—"

Talk—talk—talk—through the long, sedative afternoons. Sometimes Molla dozed a little, coming up to consciousness for snatches of it and then slipping off again, her head over toward one shoulder and her hand automatically at the sedative jouncing motion.

"You should have seen, Molla—such a new suit as his papa bought him for *bar mizvah*—to get *bar mizvah* by us is the holy time when boy becomes a little man in his religion. His papa—how every night after supper, in the back of the store so sometimes the customers had to wait, my husband heard that child his *bar mizvah* lesson. A rabbi—that was what his papa wanted for him to be—a rabbi. But he didn't want it—he wanted to sell shoes—like his papa. All right, he should sell shoes! How his papa learned him from the ground up the shoe business. How we lived our whole lives for that boy. None but the nicest girls at our house for Friday night supper—maybe he should fall in love with one. There was one—Selma Rabinovitch—a wife we could have been proud of for him—four of her own beautiful children now and a husband in the mattress business."

"My boy should have missed that! And for what?—such a blonde *shickser* what don't do nothing except set him against his mother and his religion and throw out his money for him faster as he can make it. Blonde—*shickser*—Pal—my boy—gone! Thank God his papa didn't live to see it—maybe he blames me when we meet again. I couldn't help it, Julius. I tried—I prayed—she got him with her white flesh, Julius—blonde flesh like he wasn't used to. When a woman gets a boy that way—not even his God, Julius—can hold him back."

And so on and on through the whimpering lips, until the copper band of light around the lake snapped out, and with a great pulling and tugging and sometimes the help of a passer-by Molla began to yank the wheel chair up the steps that were hewn out of natural rock.

That summer Palestine and his wife took a two weeks' holiday at a small lake resort upstate known as Becker's Point. May's second brother ran what they called "the pickle boat" around the lake there. A small provision tug which puffed about all



"You have been called upon to make certain sacrifices," said Palestine. "That's part of this game of marriage."

day, dispensing from landing to landing the tinned, the tabloid and the compressed foods of the summer colony.

"You would rather have your vacation, Pal, by Fleishmans in the Catskills where you're used to it, but lots she cares where you get your vacation just so she gets hers. Her brother with his store on a boat. We're plain but substantial people. In our family we got our stores on streets like it is legitimate. I pretend

like I don't know it, but just the same I do know it that it is your hard earned money, son, put him in that business on a boat. And now my boy has got to go and see her brother lose his money in such a business what ain't even on land to pay taxes."

Palestine took his mother by the wrists and pressed his fingers into them until white areas sprang. "Mama, don't start anything with May now. I *do* want to go to Becker's Point. I need

a rest. I'm nervous. Terribly nervous."

"I won't say anything, son, to her if I bust with it. I'm only saying it to you—I know how you like it at Fleishmans in the Catskills."

"I'll send you there, ma—Molla can take you."

"Me? I don't think on myself. I'm satisfied to stay home and do a little saving—but that you should have to lay around such a goy place!"

"Ma, if I hear that hateful word from you one more time! I'm worn out—I can't stand it—I'm nervous—you hear—"

"All right, son. Don't holler. Maybe I won't be here so much longer you should holler at me like that—if only I wasn't afraid to die and meet papa—"

He dropped to one knee, kissing her hand.

"Mama, mama, don't torment me. I love her, mama, and I—I hate her! That's torment for you—torment of Hell on earth. To love a woman at the same time you hate her!"

So for two weeks of an August that glared down upon the city until it was as bleached and polished as old bone, Molla and Mrs. Palestine had the flat to themselves.

Hot, motionless days and nights that seemed to sit still and brood like pyramids! For the time, Molla slept on a cot at the foot of the old woman's bed. She tossed a great deal and a little moan ran through her light snores, and sometimes she started up with short sharp cries.

"Son! Don't let her! Julius! It's *Pesach*. Son—don't eat that bread! *Shickser!* A *shickser* wife! No, no, papa—I tried—I begged. I prayed. The dance halls—don't be mad with me, papa . . ."

Often Molla had to get up and turn on the light.

"You bane dreaming, Mrs. Palestine. See. It's Molla. Here, let me fix your pillows—take a sip of water—so—there's nobody here but Molla."

"I thought it was *Pesach*, Molla—when my people must eat only matzoth—the unleavened bread of God—and she wouldn't let me. She stepped on them once," and up went the voice to the peak of hysteria that was so hard to quell. "She stepped on them once with her heels—matzoth—God's bread. I can't ever forgive her that . . ."

And so on and so on and so on through the burning deserts of these motionless August nights, and sometimes, of sheer exhaustion, Molla slept. Vastly.

One dawn a withered leaf fluttered down upon the heavy torpor of Molla. It was Mrs. Palestine's hand, plucking at her from across the footboard of her bed. "Molla!"

"Oh—what—yes, Mrs. Palestine."

"Molla, I been called home. I want to go, Molla. It ain't long now before I won't be here no more, and before I go—I want to go back down there. It won't be so hard I should have to face Julius if first I can only go home."

"Why, Mrs. Palestine, you bane home—here."

"Here is not home for me. Get me my foulard dress and my bonnet. I want we should start before the heat of the day."

"But your son will not like it."



A sudden slyness came curling out in the old woman's face. "No, he don't like it if I go, Molla. It ain't stylish that his old mother should remember old days, but, Molla, please, take me home. I want more as anything to go. Only down by Division Street."

"Mrs. Palestine—you can't walk—"

"Who says I can't walk? It is only when I ain't got no ambition that I can't walk. Take me home, Molla. I can walk there. I got to go. I can't stand it no more. The ache to go home. If you don't take me I crawl by myself on my hands and my knees. I ain't here long no more. I know it by my dreams. And I got to go home first. Look, Molla, when I got ambition, see how I can walk—see, Molla—please—"

And sure enough she began to limp about, outlandish in her nightdress with the rack of her old body shaking through, but her face thrust out ahead of herself like a lantern.

"Mrs. Palestine—your son—I promised to take good care—"

She was slyer and slyer, her eyebrows running up into little peaks and her cheek bones and chin jutting out into points.



"I can't go no farther, Molla. I'm too happy. I'm home."

Donnan Fink

"He don't got to know, Molla. Take me home, Molla, before I die. I'm going to die—soon. I hear it at nights underneath my sleep. And you know what it is, Molla, to hear things—that way. Because always you too are listening to something. I heard it again last night. Take me home, Molla, so I can get strength back to meet papa—I want my old home where we lived twenty years and where my boy learned his *bar mizvah* lessons behind the counter—I want to go back—"

And Molla washed the old face of its tear traces, brushed back the old hair into thin streaks that scarcely covered the scalp and fastened around her the decent silk foulard dress.

The August day came out at them like a parched and coated tongue as they started for Division Street.

The wheels ran and banged and a breeze blew through the street car. A breeze as curiously alive as breath.

It stood the little invisible nap of fine hairs on Molla's forearm up on end in an electric little rash, and it rushed against her ears thick with words that could not form themselves out of the two dozen languages that the East Side exuded. A conglomerate breath, rich in nationalities, and that would one day find voice. Molla, somehow, knew that rich kind of muteness. It beat up against her so.

At Canal Street it was as if the sidewalks ran shouting to meet them. It was hard to steady Mrs. Palestine against the dizzying swirl because she was crying and through the dimness of tears wading her way eastward, her umbrella, which she carried as a steadying cane, waving out before her as if to clear the way of children and languid puffs of dirty newspaper and rinds and rinds of fruit.

"Ten years since I been home, Molla. (Continued on page 164)



Illustration by M. L. Bower

ALI DIAB—

One of the Most Interesting Persons I've Ever Met

I WAS his guest. That meant I was under the protection of every man and woman and child of his hook-nosed and lean-faced tribe. It meant that for eighty-four hours after my departure he and his tribe would be bound in sacred honor to avenge any wrong done me and to make good anything stolen from me. Yes, it seems absurd. But in the Syrian wilderness, in my boyhood, there were no hotels and no police stations. Bedouin hospitality supplied both those lacks and had done so since the days of Genesis.

During my stay in the black tents, the stately old Sheik proved himself the most perfect host I have known. There was a grave majesty about him that I yearned to copy. It would have been as easy for me to acquire Caruso's voice.

He was Ali Diab, hereditary Sheik of one of the most formidable Bedouin tribes in all Syria. (*Sheik*, by the way, is pronounced *Shake*, not *Sheek*.) Bit by bit—never from himself—I picked up a score of true tales about Ali Diab.

In his early youth—he was white of beard when I knew him—his father went to war with a neighboring tribe. The campaign promised hardship and more than usual peril. Wherefore, command was given that none should join the expedition except grown men. Young Ali Diab declared himself a grown man.

"None may call himself a man grown until his beard is long and thick enough for a wooden beard comb to be driven into it and to hang there," his father made answer.

For reply, the lad picked up a heavy beard comb and drove it with all his might through his own beardless chin.

"Am I a man now?" he asked; and he went forth to war.

In later days an enemy Sheik slew Ali Diab's father in single combat. A few months afterward the slayer was a fugitive from the troops of the Pasha—most Bedouin tribes have ever been at odds with the Turkish government—and fled to Ali Diab for protection. Staggering, wounded and famished, into

the young Sheik's tent, he begged for the hospitality of the tribe. "What food can you expect from my hands, O my foe?" demanded Ali Diab.

"What your generosity prompts," was the reply.

Without a word, Ali Diab stalked out of the tent and to the mountain pastures where his flocks were grazing. These flocks represented his sole wealth. Drawing his sword he strode among them. Before he sheathed the weapon again, he had killed three hundred of his best sheep and goats. Pointing to their carcasses he inquired of his enemy: "Is my generosity proven?"

Covering the retreat of the women and children of his tribe, through a rocky cleft in the hills, with the Pasha's cavalry close behind, Ali Diab was stunned by a glancing musket shot; but not before he had strewn a semicircle of dead Turks in front of him. He came to his senses in the Pashalik camp. There the Turkish Bey informed him he was to be beheaded at once.

Ali Diab asked but one favor from his captor—a cup of water to quench his fever thirst. The cup was brought. Ali Diab lifted it to his lips. Then he paused, looking apprehensively behind him.

"Drink!" exhorted the Bey, reading his thoughts. "None shall strike you down from behind."

Still the Bedouin hesitated. "Drink!" repeated the Bey. "You shall not be put to death until you have drunk every drop."

"Swear it!" pleaded Ali Diab.

"I swear it!" said the Bey. "I swear it on the triple oath that none may break and hope to look upon the face of Allah the Compassionate."

Ali Diab smiled happily. Then he emptied the cup on the ground. The hot sand absorbed the water at once.

"You have sworn I shall not be put to death until I have drunk it all," he reminded the dumfounded Bey. "You have sworn it on the oath that none may break."

That night he made his escape.



By ALBERT PAYSON TERHUNE

Years before I met him, his young sister went up to Jerusalem with her mother to buy cloth. None of the men of the tribe might venture near a garrison city. But women were not regarded as outlaws.

A few days later a guest told Ali Diab that at Jerusalem he had seen a veiled woman who bore some resemblance to the Sheik's sister, speaking to a man.

Ali Diab made no sign that he heard. But that night he set out for Jerusalem. He arrived, one evening at dusk, outside the khan where his sister and her mother lodged. There he called to his sister by name. The girl ran to the door to welcome him. As she appeared at the threshold, he shot her dead. Then, unhindered, he went back to the wilderness. He had wiped out the blot on his tribal and family honor. His deed provoked only admiration from his fellow Bedouins.

Ali Diab, like most real Bedouins, took pride in tracing his direct descent from Ishmael—the son of Abraham who was exiled to the desert and who became an outlaw, as were his descendants. The Biblical prophecy has come true, in every detail, concerning Ali Diab and other offspring of that first desert exile: "Thou . . . shalt call his name Ishmael. And he will be a wild man; his hand will be against every man and every man's hand against him."

My friend Ali Diab was an Oriental Robin Hood. At fifty campfires the songs of his deeds were sung. The poor acted eagerly as unpaid spies, to notify him of any expedition aimed against him, or of rich caravans he might waylay.

Let me run ahead of my story and tell the manner of Ali Diab's death. Few heroes die heroic deaths. Lord Cardigan, for instance, led the whirlwind charge of the Light Brigade at Balaklava, "while horse and hero fell," and escaped without a scratch. Later Cardigan was jogging along an English lane when his horse stumbled, throwing the hero and breaking his neck.

Ali Diab had survived a hundred fights. All Syria vowed he bore a charmed life. One day he and his followers were rounding up the cattle of a conquered Bedouin enemy, when a herd boy—scarcely more than a child—to whom the Sheik spoke harshly, snatched a blunderbuss from a heap of captured weapons and sent its load of slugs and bent nails crashing through Ali Diab's brain.

He was in late middle age when he lost his weathered heart to the daughter of an ally Sheik. Though he was grizzled and homely and bore disfiguring battle scars on his wrinkled face, the girl was more than willing to marry him.

Riding homeward with his bride, through a stretch of country supposed to be safe for him—he found the road blocked by a patrol of six Turkish light cavalymen. Instantly he caught the bridle of his wife's horse and guided the fleet stallion, along with his own, down the rocky path at headlong speed. But above the clatter of hoofs and above the shouts and shots of the pursuing Turks shrilled the bride's angry voice.

"I did not marry you because you are young or beautiful to look upon!" she screamed at the flying Sheik. "I married you because of the tales of your bravery. And now take me back to my father's tents. For I have not married a wolf"—*diab* is Arabic for wolf—"but a pariah dog that slinks from danger."

That was quite enough for Ali Diab. Wheeling his horse, he charged the handful of cavalymen. Before they were aware of his change of front, he had cloven the skull of one of them with his saber and had emptied his single-shot pistol into another. A third he rode down. The remaining soldiers gave back before his maniac assault, and from the terror of his fame. They fled in panic fear from the inspired madman.

Wounded, panting, victorious, the Sheik rode back to his bride. "Am I wolf or pariah dog?" he demanded.

A New Novel
By
**Peter B.
Kyne**



The Story So Far:

GASTON LARRIEAU called Gaston of the Beard is a huge and hearty mariner who has lived for years in the South Sea Islands married to the Queen of Riva. After his wife's death he brings his beautiful daughter, Tamea Oluolu Larrieau, who is now herself Queen of Riva, to San Francisco to complete her education in America. But his plans are brought to nothing when the quarantine physician announces that he has an incipient case of leprosy, and must be herded in with others similarly afflicted.

The old pagan determines that he will never go to the leper colony. He sends for his friend Dan Pritchard, younger member of the firm of Casson & Pritchard, owners of Gaston's ship, the Moorea, and when Dan arrives solemnly appoints him Tamea's guardian. To Tamea, Gaston leaves his fortune—some quarter of a million thriftily saved—and his collection of pearls. Then, garlanded with a *lei* of flowers, South Sea fashion, he commits suicide by stepping overboard, and Dan is left with a lovely girl softly weeping out her heart on his shoulder.

Dan Pritchard, indeed, is one of those men who seem "born to daddy the world." He calls himself a square peg in a round

hole; for his successful business career does not satisfy his artistic and adventurous instincts, and he is constantly irked by friction with his elder partner, Casson. Yet his responsibilities are such that he feels he cannot give up. He has this very day talked the situation out with his closest woman friend, Maisie Morrison, niece of Casson; and he has also, to his own amazement, been moved to kiss Maisie—their first kiss in a friendship of many years—and a disturbing experience to them both.

Dan feels that he cannot leave his totally unsophisticated South Sea inheritance to the tender mercies of a complex modern hotel. He proposes that she go to Maisie's; but "I do not like the girl Maisie," says Tamea intuitively. There is no alternative for Dan but to take her to his own home.

There his appearance with a gypsy-like beauty in an old pea-jacket, sandals, and carrying an accordion, is productive of some domestic confusion. Graves, the chauffeur, decides that Dan is just a little touched; and Mrs. Pippy, the Puritanic and efficient housekeeper, expresses her disapproval in no uncertain terms. Julia, the Irish maid, however, takes to Tamea instantly, and Tamea naively insists on having her as a sort of personal slave, bestowing on her a kiss and a ten thousand dollar pearl. And Sooy Wan, the Chinese cook, who has served the Pritchard family thirty-five years and brought Dan up from babyhood, is openly delighted. He has it settled at once that Dan will marry Tamea and have "fi", six, seven, maybe eight son—"the height of earthly bliss in his philosophy.

Dinner arrives, and with it Tamea in a becoming gown which Mrs. Pippy has borrowed from Maisie. Dan admires her immensely, and during the meal finds that she is quick to catch on to the niceties of etiquette. Very early, Tamea, worn out by the day's happenings, retires to prepare for bed, a pathetic

Never The Twain Shall Meet

Illustrations by Dean Cornwell



figure in a strange land; and she insists on kissing Dan a filial good night.

When she has gone, Sooeey Wan sticks his head in through the door. "Velly nice!" he chortles. "Heap nice kisse, eh? You bet! Velly nice!"

When Dan found himself alone, a still small voice had commenced to whisper, that the extraordinary events of that day were but a preliminary to still more extraordinary events to follow.

CHAPTER VII

THE GUEST chambers in Dan Pritchard's home were two in number—richly furnished but solid looking rooms for men. Julia scuttled from one to the other, in a frenzy of indecision as to which was worthy to receive her charge, while Tamea sat at the head of the staircase and waited. Julia was several minutes making her decision as to whether Tamea would look best in the room with the taupe carpet and the French gray single bed, or the one with the old rose carpet and the old black walnut double bed. Finally she decided on the former, and then sought Mrs. Pippy to ask if Miss Morrison had sent over a spare nightgown. It developed that Miss Morrison had neglected this important detail, so Mrs. Pippy graciously donated one of her own and Julia returned with it.

Then she discovered that Tamea, being a young woman of initiative and decision, had very promptly solved the problem of sleeping quarters. While she had been no stranger to bedsteads and pillows, nevertheless her upbringing in Riva had taught Tamea that there was no necessity to be particular as to a lodging for the night. She could always glean an excellent rest on a mat spread on a stone floor, with a polished section of the trunk of a cocopalms as a pillow; and while waiting for Julia to return, the richly carpeted floor had attracted her attention. Promptly she lay down in the hall, pillowed her head on her arm and went to sleep almost instantly.

"Poor lamb!" murmured the sympathetic Julia, and fled to summon Mrs. Pippy to behold the unconventional guest.

Mrs. Pippy gazed disapprovingly, shook her handsome silvery head as who should say, "Mr. Pritchard's action in bringing this tomboy home for us to care for is quite beyond me!" and retired to her room again, still shaking her head.

Julia awakened her sleepy charge. "Come with me, Tammy, darlin'," she pleaded. "Sure, the flure is no place for you."

"It is very soft," Tamea protested. "And very warm, for such a cold country."

"Wait till Sooeey Wan—bad cess to him!—puts the furnace out. Ye'd be froze shtiff in the mornin', Tammy—"

"My name is Tamea Oluolu Larrieau. You may call me Tamea, but to others I must be Mademoiselle Larrieau."

"Oh, sure, why not lave me call ye Tammy? Not a one but me will use that name."

"Your desire is granted because you are kind to me, Julia."

"Thank you, Tammy. Here, sit you down in this chair and I'll take off your shippers . . . Now, thin, here's your nightgown. Take off your clothes and put the nightgown on whilst I fix the bed for you and get you a dhrink of wather."

Tamea held up Mrs. Pippy's nightgown and looked it over critically. "The wife of the missionary in Riva had several such as this," she commented. "It is not pretty. I had prettier

ones than this aboard ship, but—for a reason—I brought no baggage ashore with me. I do not like this garment." She tossed it through the open bathroom door into the tub.

"Now, Tammy," began Julia, mildly expostulating.

"I will not wear it, Julia."

"Sure, why not, Tammy, you little ninny, you?"

"What is a ninny?"

"Heaven knows," the helpless Julia replied, "but I'm thinkin' I'm it, whatever it may be. Why won't you wear the nightgown, Tammy? Sure all nice gir'ls—"

"It belongs to her," said Tamea and pointed majestically upward. "It bears the letter P."

"Be the Rock of Cashel," sighed poor Julia, "you're vindictive, so you are," and without further ado she went upstairs and brought down one of her own plain *chemises de nuit*. Without a word Tamea donned it and crept dutifully into bed.

"Do you not say your prayers before you get into bed, Tammy?" the pious Julia queried reproachfully.

Tamea shook her head, dark and beautiful against the snowy pillow. Julia sighed. Her own problems were always dumped, metaphorically speaking, in the lap of her Christian God, night and morning.

"This is truly a bed for a queen," said Tamea thoughtfully. "Is Monsieur Dan Pritchard, then, a very rich man?"



"My dear Dan, control yourself," stammered Caason.

"How dare you commit me to ruin without consulting me?" said Dan.

"He have barrels of it," Julia replied reverently.

"My father gave me to him, Julia."

"Faith, an' that's where he showed his common sinse. Divil a finer gintleman could you find the wide wur'ld over."

Fell a long silence. Then: "Where is Madame Pritchard?"

"The masther has never been married, Tammy."

"What? Has he, then, in his house none but serving women?"

"Ssh! Don't talk like that, Tammy. Of course he hasn't."

"Strange," murmured Tamea thoughtfully. "He is different from other men of his race. Have no women sought his favor?"

Julia was embarrassed and exasperated. "How the divil should I know?" she protested indignantly.

"You live in this house. You are his servant. Have you not ears? Are you blind?"

"I never shpy on the masther."

"Perhaps," Tamea suggested, "it is because Monsieur Dan Pritchard has a hatred of women."

"Sorra bit o' that."

"Then is it that women have a hatred of him?"

"They'd give the two eyes out of their heads to marry him."

A silence. "All this is very strange, Julia."

"Don't worry about it, Tammy. Go to sleep now."

"Here is a great mystery. Has Monsieur Dan Pritchard, then, no children?"

"Heaven forbid!" Julia was now thoroughly scandalized.

"Here is a mystery. Does he not desire sons to inherit his name and wealth?"

"I never discussed the matther wit' him."

"This is, indeed, a strange country with strange customs."

"We'll think o' that in the mornin', Tammy darlin'. Shall I put out the light?"

"Yes, my good Julia. Good night."

"Good night, dear." Julia switched off the light and retired to the door. Here, poised for flight, she turned and shot back at her charge a question that had been perplexing her:

"Are you a Protestant or a Catholic, Tammy?"

"Neither," murmured Tamea.

"Glory be! 'Tis not a Jew you are?"

"No."

"Well, what, thin?"

"Are you trying to convert me, Julia?"

"I am not."

"Then why do you ask?"

"I'm that curious, Tammy."

"If you act like a missionary's wife I shall dismiss you from my service, Julia. I have no religion. I am free. I do what I jolly well please. Yes, you bet."

"An' there's an idea for you!"

Julia soliloquized as she passed softly out. "Begorry, we'll have a grand time of it with that one, so we will. Somebody's been puttin' notions in her head. Ochone! Where the divil was that one raised, I dunno. Angel that she is to look at she's had a slack father an' mother, I'll lay odds on that."

Julia sighed and went downstairs to seek the aid of Sooley Wan in scratching out the numbers of her choice on a ticket for the next day's drawing in the Chinese lottery. She found Sooley Wan washing the dishes and singing softly.

"Are you singin' or cryin', Sooley Wan?" Julia greeted him.

"Hullah for hell," said Sooley Wan. He tossed a soup plate to the ceiling and caught it deftly as it came down. "Boss ketchum velly nice girl," he began.

"Can't the poor man be kind to an orphan without you, you yellow divil, puttin' dogs in windows?"

"Velly nice," Sooley Wan repeated doggedly. "Pretty soon I think give boss many sons."

"Say-y-y, what sort o' place is this gettin' to be, anyhow?"



Dan quickly became master of the situation. "Put the coat on, please, Tamea," he said, and waited.

"Pretty soon Sooeey Wan think this going be legular place. One house no ketchum baby, no legular house."

"Say nothin' to Mrs. Pippy of what's in that ould head of yours, Sooeey Wan. What wit' one haythen downstairs an' another upstairs the woman'll be givin' notice."

Sooeey Wan pulled open a drawer in the kitchen table and tossed out a handful of bills and silver. "Ketchum ten spot for you today, Julia," he explained. "You lucky. Ketchum ten spot, ketchum pearl."

"Faith, you'll catch more than that if you don't lear'n to mind your own business," Julia warned him darkly.

Long after the household had retired Dan Pritchard sat before the dining room fireplace reviewing in his mind's eye the startling

events of that day. He felt depressed, obsessed by an unreasonable, wholly inexplicable presentiment of events still more startling to occur in the not very distant future.

As a rule, the majority of women puzzled Dan, many of them frightened him, and all of them disturbed him. Of all the women he had ever known, Maisie Morrison alone appeared to possess the gift of contributing to his mental rest, his sense of spiritual well-being, even while her practical, definite and positive personality occasionally disturbed his creature comfort, robbed him of that sense of leadership and strength which it is the right of all men to exhibit toward the women of their choice, and appeared to render null and void the necessity for any exhibition of the protective instinct. Infrequently Dan

complained to himself that Maisie would be a transcendently wonderful girl if she but possessed just a trifle more imagination; having convinced himself that this was so, he would watch for definite evidence to convict Maisie of such a lack, only to be hurled back into his old state of mental confusion by indubitable evidence that Maisie could read him and his innermost thoughts as readily as if he were a signboard.

When he had complained to Maisie that morning that he was a square peg in a round hole, he had voiced the unrest which all born radicals experience when forced to live conservatively. For Dan knew he was a radical in his viewpoint on many things held sacred by his conservative brethren; he knew he lacked the instinctive caution and constructive conservatism so evident in Maisie. He felt as one whose soul was hobbled with a ball and chain. Maisie, he knew, suffered from no such sense of repression, and this knowledge of her mental freedom sometimes forced upon him a secret, almost womanish irritation.

Sometimes Dan was almost convinced that he ought to rid himself of his habit of introspection, marry Maisie and live happily ever afterward. Then, just as he would be almost on the point of growing loverlike, Maisie would seem to pop out at him from a mental ambush; would seem to lay a cool finger on the soul of him and say quite positively: "Here, Dan, is where it hurts. The pain isn't where you think it is at all. You are a foolish, imaginative man, and if you do not heed my direction now, you will eventually regret that you did not."

And then Dan, outwardly smiling and expansive but inwardly glum and shriveling, would tell himself that he could never, never dwell in idyllic married bliss with such a dominating and interfering woman:

and Maisie, secretly furious, baffled, would watch him change from the devoted admirer to the warm friend.

Tonight Dan decided that he was, beyond the slightest vestige of a doubt, tremendously fond of Maisie Morrison. But—he was not at all certain that he loved her well enough to ask her to marry him; he marveled now, more than ever previously, what imp of impulse had moved him to kiss her that morning. How warm and sweet and responsive had been that momentary pressure of her lips to his! He visualized again that lambent light that had leaped into her eyes . . . had he gone too far?

The telephone in the booth under the stairs in the entrance hall rang faintly. He reached for the extension telephone on the living room table and said: "Yes, Maisie?"

"How did you know it was I?" Maisie's voice demanded.

"I cannot answer that question, Maisie. I merely knew. You see, I was just beginning to think that I might have called you up and—"

"Indeed, yes," she interrupted. How like her, he reflected. Her agile brain was always leaping ahead to a conclusion and landing on it fairly and squarely. "I have waited three hours for a report from you, Dan, and when eleven o'clock came and you had not telephoned I couldn't restrain my curiosity any longer. Mrs. Pippy telephoned about seven o'clock and told me an extraordinary and unbelievable tale of a semi-savage young woman whom you had brought home and established as a guest in your bachelor domicile. Mrs. Pippy tried her best to appear calm, but I sensed—"



Tamea waited drearily while Julia decided which of the guest chambers was worthy to receive her.

"I'm quite certain you did, Maisie," he interrupted in turn. "You sensed Mrs. Pippy's amazement, indignation and disapproval. You're the most marvelous woman for sensing things that I have ever known."

"But then, Dan," she reminded him, "you haven't known very many women intimately. You're such a shy man. Sometimes I think you must have gleaned all of your knowledge of my sex from your father and Sooy Wan. Who is the South Sea belle, Dan, and what do you mean by picking up with such a creature and expecting me to help you render her presentable?"

"I didn't expect you to, Maisie. I didn't ask you and I didn't suggest that Mrs. Pippy ask you."

"I couldn't get any very coherent information from Mrs. Pippy. She was greatly agitated. However, I called Julia up a few minutes later and from Julia I learned that your guest hasn't sufficient of a wardrobe to pad a crutch."

"Julia is very amusing," he replied evenly. "However, do not think the young lady arrived here in a hula-hula costume. I am her guardian."

"How do you know you are?" Maisie demanded, a bit crisply.

"Her father, Captain Larrieau, of our schooner Moorea, asked me to be before he died this afternoon."

"Hum-m-m!" Maisie was silent momentarily. "How like a man to think he can fill such an order without outside help."

He was exasperated. "There you go, Maisie," he complained, "jumping to a conclusion."

"If I've jumped to a conclusion, Dan, rest assured I have landed squarely on my objective. Why didn't you telephone me the instant you reached home with your ward? I would have been happy to aid you, Dan."

"I'm sure you would have been, Maisie, but—well—"

"I knew I was right, Dan. The only way I can find things out is to be rude and ask questions. You thought I might not approve of—"

"Of what?" he demanded triumphantly.

"Of the young woman you brought home with you, of course." Maisie's voice carried just a hint of irritation.

"Certainly not. I was certain you would approve of her. She's quite a child—about seventeen or eighteen years old, I should say—and a perfectly dazzling creature—ah, that is, amazingly interesting in her directness, her frankness, her unconventionality and innocence. I do hope you'll like her. I thought at first I could entrust her to Mrs. Pippy but—"

"I gathered as much, Dan. Now, start in at the beginning and tell me everything about her."

Dan complied with her demand. When the recital was ended, said Maisie: "What are you going to do with her, Dan?"

"My instructions from her father were to educate her and affiancé her to some worthy fellow. I shall cast my eye around the local French colony after the girl has completed her schooling. She has a fortune of approximately a quarter of a million dollars—always an interesting subject for contemplation and discussion in the matrimonial preliminaries." He heard her chuckle softly and realized that she found amusement visualizing him in the rôle of a matchmaker. "I suppose," he ventured, "you're wondering why I didn't take her to a hotel."

"Any other man in your sphere of life would, but I am not so optimistic as to expect you to do the usual thing. I'm consumed with curiosity to see your Tamea, Dan."

"A meeting can be arranged," he answered dryly. "As soon as my little queen has had an opportunity to purchase a wardrobe befitting her rank and wealth I shall be happy to have you presented at court, Maisie."

"I suppose you're going to select her wardrobe."

"No, I think Julia will attend to that."

"In Heaven's name, Dan, why Julia? Have you ever seen Julia all dressed up and about to set out for Golden Gate Park? Mrs. Pippy has excellent taste."



Preferably Tamea's school should be in a boundless prairie—and Dan bought some magazines to locate it.

"Mrs. Pippy is not, I fear, the favorite of the queen."

"Then I shall attend to her outfitting, Dan."

"Will you, Maisie, dear?"

"Of course, idiot."

"Well, that lifts a burden off my shoulders."

"You do not deserve such consideration, Dan. You're too uncommunicative when you are the possessor of amazing news. However, you're such a helpless, blundering Simple Simon I knew somebody would have to manage you while you're managing Tamea. So I concluded to volunteer for the sacrifice."

"Maisie, you're a peach. I could kiss you for that speech."

"Really, you're running wild, Dan. You kissed me once today. And I've been wondering why ever since."

"How should I know?" he confessed. He had a sudden, freakish impulse to annoy her.

"Stupid! Were I as stupid as you—I'll be at your house at about ten o'clock tomorrow and take charge of your problem."

"I shall be eternally grateful."

"And eternally silly and eternally afraid of me and what I'm going to think about everything. I could pull your nose. Good night." She hung up without waiting for his answer.



The stab of jealousy was more poignant this time. It was as if Maisie had heliographed: "Young lady, you've got

"I fear me Maisie is the bossy, efficient type of young woman," he soliloquized as he replaced the receiver. "I hope she and Tamea will hit it off together. I sincerely hope it."

At midnight Sooley Wan came in from Chinatown, following a prodigious burning of devil papers in a local joss house and a somewhat profitable two hours of poker.

His slant eyes appraised Dan kindly. "Boss," he ordered, "go bed. You all time burn 'em too muchee light, too muchee coal, too muchee wood. Cost muchee money." He moved briskly about the room, switching off the electric lights. "Too muchee thinkee, too muchee headache," he warned Dan. "You not happy, boss, you thinkee too much. No good!"

"Oh, confound your Oriental philosophy!" Dan rasped back at him. "The curse of it is, you're right!"

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Sooley Wan pointed authoritatively upward and Dan slowly climbed the stairs to his room.

Thus ended a momentous day.

CHAPTER VIII

AT BREAKFAST the following morning Maisie Morrison decided to make no mention to her aunt and uncle of the interesting bit of news concerning Dan Pritchard of which she was the possessor.

Always cautious and conservative, she preferred to place herself in full possession of the facts in the case, and to have this information bolstered up by her own feeling about the situation following a meeting with Dan's ward, before discussing his business with anybody.



a fight on your hands." And Tamea's smoky orbs had flashed back the reply: "Very well, I accept the challenge."

Maisie was mildly amused in the knowledge that Dan, of all men, should have such a problem thrust upon him; she looked forward with no little interest to watching the peculiar man approach his unusual duty. She expected if she mentioned the matter that old Casson would laugh patronizingly and pretend to find the situation devoid of a mature man's interest; he might even indulge himself in some light and caustic criticism, with a touch of elephantine humor in it. That had seemed to be his attitude toward Dan for a year past and Maisie resented it fiercely—all the more fiercely, in fact, because her position in Casson's household forbade an expression of her resentment.

"I think I shall motor to Del Monte this morning for two weeks of golf," old Casson announced to his wife and Maisie at breakfast. "Suppose you two pack up and go with me."

"I think that would be delightful, John," his wife replied.

"I have other fish to fry. Sorry!" Maisie answered him. "If you had hinted of this yesterday, Uncle John——"

"My dear Maisie, the idea but this moment occurred to me. Better alter your plans and come along."

She shook her head.

"It occurred to me this instant—as I have already stated—" Casson continued, "to escape boredom for two weeks. Our schooner Moorea is in port and will remain here that long, in all probability. That means the office will be set by the heels. Her bear-like skipper, Larrieau, will go roaring from one room to the other, disturbing everybody except Pritchard and amusing everybody except me. I cannot tolerate the man, and if I should see too much of him I fear I might forget his record for efficiency and dismiss him. He was a pet of Dan's father, and Dan, too, makes much of him. I dislike pets in a business office."

Maisie looked at him coolly. "Then you will be happy to know that your contemplated exile to Del Monte is quite unnecessary, Uncle John. Captain Larrieau was discovered, upon arrival, to be a leper, so he sent ashore for Dan, settled all of his business and committed suicide by drowning yesterday evening."

"Bless my soul! Where did you glean this astounding intelligence?"

"I talked with Dan over the telephone late last night."

"You should have told me sooner, Maisie."

Old Casson's voice was stern; his weak, handsome face pretended chagrin.

"Why?"

"Why? What a question! Isn't the man in my employ—or, at least, wasn't he?"

"He was in the employ of Casson and Pritchard, and Dan Pritchard has attended to the matter for the firm."

"I should have been communicated with immediately. Pritchard should have telephoned to me, not to you."

"Oh dear, Uncle John! One would think you revered the man so highly you planned to have the bay dragged to recover his body, instead of being happy in the knowledge that you have gotten rid of the nuisance."

"Hump-h-h-h! We'll not discuss it further, my dear. However, it is difficult for me to refrain from expressing my irritation. How like young Pritchard it was to disregard me entirely in this matter! For all the deference or consideration that fellow pays me as the senior member of the firm, I might as well be a traffic policeman."

Maisie's fine eyes flamed in sudden anger. "Has it ever occurred to you, Uncle John, that in declining to annoy you with unnecessary details, by his persistence in relieving you of the labor and worry of the business management of Casson and Pritchard, Dan may be showing you the courtesy and consideration due you as the senior member of the firm?"

"I am not a back number—yet, Maisie," he assured her.

"Why do you not buy him out, Uncle John? He seems to be a very great trial to you."

Old Casson appeared to consider this suggestion very seriously as he gravely tapped the shell of his matutinal egg. "That isn't a half bad idea, Maisie," he answered. "At present, however, I am scarcely in position to buy his interest. I anticipate this condition will be materially changed within the next three or four months, and then—"

He paused eloquently and scooped his egg into the glass.

"I infer you have a hen on," Maisie suggested.

"Perhaps the metaphor would be less mixed if we substituted a goose for the hen. I believe the goose is the fowl currently credited with the ability to lay golden eggs."

"John Casson!" His wife now spoke for the first time. "Are you mixed in another gamble?"

"Not at all, my dear, not at all. I have invested in several cargoes of Chinese rice at a very low price, and I have sold one cargo at a very high price. I am holding the others for the crest of a market that is rising like a toy balloon. It isn't gambling, my dear. It's just a mortal certainty."

The good lady sighed. How often, in the thirty years of her life with John Casson, had she heard him, in those same buoyant, confident, mellifluous tones, assure her of the infallibility of victory due to his superior judgment!

As usual, Maisie placed her finger on the sore spot. "What does Dan think of it, Uncle John?"

"He doesn't think anything, my dear. He doesn't know."

"Oh, I see! This is a private venture of yours?"

He nodded. "Yes—and no, Maisie. It's a Casson and Pritchard deal, only I'm engineering it myself. I'm going to prove to that overconfident young man the truth of the old saying 'Nothing risked, nothing gained.' Why, the biggest thing in years lay right under his nose—and he passed it by."

"He was in Honolulu on that pineapple deal when you stumbled across this good thing, was he not, Uncle John?"

"Yes, but then he knew about it before he left for Honolulu."

"Well, I hope you'll make a killing, Uncle John."

He beamed his thanks upon her. "When I do—and I cannot help doing it—I'm going to be mighty nice to my niece," he assured her. "However," he continued reminiscently, "my day for taking a sporting chance is over. I've learned my lesson."

"Have you?" his wife ventured hopefully.

"Just to prove to you that I have," he challenged, "if I get an offer of twenty-four cents per pound, f.o.b. Havana, today,

I'll sell every pound of rice I have in transit or hold under purchase contract."

"What was the market yesterday, John?"

"Twenty-three cents."

"Sell at that today," Maisie urged him.

He smiled and shook his head. These women! How little they knew of the great game of business! How little did they realize that, to succeed, a man must be possessed of an amazing courage, a stupendous belief in his own powers, in his knowledge of the game he is playing. Maisie read him accurately. He was as easy to read as an electric sign.

When he had departed for the office, Mrs. Casson, a dainty, very youthful appearing woman of fifty-five, and long since robbed of any illusions concerning certain impossible phases of her husband's character, spoke up. "Sometimes, Maisie, I suspect John Casson is in his second childhood."

"You're wrong, Auntie. In some respects he hasn't emerged from his first childhood. For instance, Uncle John is nurturing the belief that Dan isn't aware of his operations."

"You think Dan knows?"

"I'm sure of it."

"Has he told you so?"

"No."

"He ought to be told."

"I shall tell him—this very morning. Uncle John, wrapped in his supreme sense of self-sufficiency, appears to have forgotten that in an unlimited partnership each partner is irrevocably bound by the actions of the other."

"I wonder at Dan's patience with him."

"I do not. Dan has explained it to me."

Mrs. Casson's maternal glance dwelt tenderly upon her dead sister's daughter. "Maisie, I want to talk to you about Dan," she began, but Maisie raised a deprecating hand.

"What profit could possibly arise from such a discussion?"

Mrs. Casson, however, was a woman driven by curiosity. "I wonder if he is in love with you, my dear. Sometimes I am almost certain of it, and at other times I am not so certain."

"I think dear old simple Dan finds himself similarly afflicted."

"Well?" The query, the inflection and the dramatic pause before the good soul continued were not lost on Maisie. "Why don't you do something about it, dear?"

"Why should I?"

"You're twenty-four years old—and certainly Dan Pritchard is the most eligible bachelor in your set. And I know you're very, very fond of him."

"Everybody is. He is wholly lovable."

"Well, then, Maisie—"

"Men dislike pursuit, dear. That is their peculiar prerogative. I prefer to be dear to Dan Pritchard, as his closest friend, rather than to disturb him as a prospective wife. Dan is old-fashioned, quite dignified, idealistic, altruistic, artistic, and as shy and retiring as a rabbit. I'm certain he isn't the least bit interested in your plans to alter his scheme of existence by adding a wife to it."

"You'd marry Dan Pritchard tomorrow if he asked you today."

"Perhaps," Maisie agreed. "However, I shall not pursue him nor shall I hurl myself at him. I prefer to operate on the principle that, after all, I may prove more or less eligible myself!"

"You desire to be pursued, I see."

"What woman does not—by the right man?"

"Then is Dan Pritchard the right man?"

"No woman could really answer such a question truthfully until after she had been married to Dan. I have never given much thought to Dan as a matrimonial possibility."

"That is an admission that you have at least given him some thought, Maisie."

"Of course, silly. What is a girl to think when a man's freakish humor dictates that he shall develop all of the outward evidences of a sentimental interest one week and shrink from exhibiting the slightest evidence of it a week later? Sometimes I think that Dan is a habit with me; sometimes I'm quite certain I am a habit with him. I think I was twelve years old when Dan took me to a vaudeville show one Saturday afternoon. I remember I held his hand all through the show and he fed me so much candy I was ill. However, he is a pleasant and delightful habit to me, and I am not anxious to renounce him; I hope he feels the same toward me. By the way, I have an engagement with him this morning. I must run along and dress."

She left her aunt gazing speculatively after her. Mrs. Casson shook her head and sighed. "It's her frightful spirit of independence," she soliloquized. "She scares him away. I just know it. And I do wish I knew what to do about it."

Providentially, she did not!

(Continued on page 174)

By ADELA

ROGERS ST. JOHNS

*A Story of
a Good
Bad Woman*

Thumbs Down

Illustrations by

Charles D. Mitchell



*Dorothy
Vicente*

SO MUCH is known of the story of Dorothy Vicente and yet so very, very little. On the surface, it is a garish, flaunting, evil thing that has filled many columns of black type. An eight column headline story that has not been good reading for the young.

The world that once flung its wealth and its applause at her dancing feet has turned thumbs down on little Dotty Vicente. And that is natural enough.

But in Hollywood, where the silence of her merry, impudent laugh is almost like an ache, where the absence of her sunshine is deeper than any shadow, where so many things are still a background for her young, irresistible indiscretions—in Hollywood, if there are thumbs turned down, they are not for Dorothy Vicente. For in Hollywood it is the true story that they tell. A simple, too commonplace, sad little story.

Not everybody in Hollywood knows that story. Not everyone knows of the lost fight. But enough people know it so that in the place she so loved and that created her, they speak her name with something like adoration.

The big, expensive limousine drew up the street of the little town, between rows of pepper trees, and stopped before a small, ornate picture theater.

One of the girls within pressed her little nose against the plate glass window and stared pugnaciously at the flaring sign.

DOROTHY VICENTE IN PERSON TONIGHT

"Can you imagine that!" said the girl, lifting one eyebrow in that characteristic gesture of hers. "My name in electric lights and everything. And a lot of poor hicks in this bum little town will come down here and give up the egg money to see me make a horse's neck of myself."

The dark, buxom girl beside her laughed a little. "Oh, Dotty, you idiot! You'll be perfectly wonderful. You always are."

"You're all wet, Rose darling. If there is anything in this world I detest more than white carnations and soft drinks it's personal appearances. Heaven knows I'm bad enough on the screen—in person I'm something you have a nightmare about."

"Stop it, Dotty," Rose scolded. "I don't think it's right for you to talk that way. You're always making fun of yourself."

"Do you expect me to do a song and dance about myself? A one act skit entitled 'The Egomaniac,' starring Miss Dorothy Vicente or any other motion picture star in Hollywood?" She leaned out to yell at the chauffeur, ignoring the speaking tube the dark-haired girl handed her. "Hey, Eddie, you dig up the guy that runs this two by four opera and find out what he expects me to do for my country. Ask him to step on it."

The chauffeur, grinning with amusement, disappeared into the theater lobby.

"I wish I knew why I came," said Dorothy Vicente nervously. "I never intended to come when I told 'em I would. I must be getting softening of the brain. What'll I do? What'll I say? I'll make some wise crack or break something or fall on my ear. Look at all those people going in there. And a lot of poor gals want to go in pictures. I wish I was back slinging hash for the section hands, I do."

The chauffeur came back, accompanied by a small and beaming gentleman of evident Hebraic extraction.

His delight had nearly overcome him.

Everybody had told him that Miss Vicente wouldn't come. She never did.

Even the studio publicity department, when they had phoned to confirm time and date, had been dubious. Miss Vicente very much disliked personal appearances. What they did not say was that Dotty Vicente was about as dependable as oil stock.

They said they hoped she would come.

And here she was.

The excited exhibitor could scarcely control himself. There was no star whom his patrons loved as they loved Dorothy

Vicente. Perhaps neither he nor they had any actual appreciation of the greatness of Dorothy Vicente's art. She was so little and so funny and so unassuming herself. But the critics knew. And the great Charles Wellington himself had called her the great dramatic artist of the screen and had said that he had learned more from her than from anyone else in the world.

But Dotty herself kicked up her heels and said: "Who is this guy Art they talk so much about? I never met him."

"Where do I get into your funny theater?" asked the star, but she twinkled at the manager and he forgave her.

That was the history of all Dotty Vicente's human contacts.

It never mattered what she did. Afterwards, she twinkled or grew mistily tearful or begged prettily. And she was forgiven.

Which, when one considers some of the things she had done, speaks volumes. Not the best thing, however, for a very young girl with a Max Franklin in the background.

"If Miss Vicente will go round to the back door. All is arranged. I have done my best. I hope it is comfortable. If there is anything you wish—"

"You haven't got a drink on you?" asked Dotty hopefully.

The exhibitor laughed. No doubt it was a joke.

The car purred into the little cobblestone alley. In the brick wall was cut a small doorway. Beside it stood a large ash can.

"Reverting to type," said Dotty Vicente as she climbed out. "You've no idea how homelike a nice alley seems to me."

In the darkness she peered about, stumbled, caught the toe of her small slipper in something that ripped and nearly threw her.

"What's that?" she said violently.

Rose leaned down and from behind the big ash can pulled out a small and exceedingly dirty baby girl. Her sex was plain, for her only garment was a faded and dirty gingham slip, which the toe of Dotty Vicente's shoe had ripped from hem to throat.

The manager opened the door and a beam of light shot out and fell upon the child. She was still asleep.

The long black lashes fell on her round dimpled cheeks, and a mass of almost white curls, matted and damp, lay about her forehead. But across the tiny brow was a great red welt and there were other red welts on her little shoulders.

In one hand she clutched the remnants of an ice cream cone, its contents liberally distributed about her small person.

Dorothy Vicente stood motionless. Her mouth was quivering, and as she saw the red welts she gave a broken cry as though she had seen something she could not—could not—bear.

One hand, on which a fortune in diamonds gleamed, reached out and touched the sticky curls and the bare kewpie stomach.

"They hurt her," she said, with infinite tenderness. A tenderness that held all the touch of mother tears. "They hurt her. So little. Give her to me."

Against the rich, soft sable the baby opened her eyes, snuggled blissfully and went back into an exhausted sleep.

"She's mine," said Dotty Vicente. "Nobody that would treat her this way has any right to her. Rose, you find out and fix it up. She's mine. Mine."

And she reached down and kissed the little red welts as though she would give all the diamonds on her fingers, all the purring limousines, all the electric lights in the world if her kisses might heal those ugly marks on the body of a little child.

Dotty Vicente was sitting at the wicker desk in her bright chintz-hung sun porch. Below her the shimmer of the wistaria mirrored in the swimming pool lay happily in the morning sunshine.

Against the pale brown wall of the dressing room building one red rose had flung its beauty, like a perfect Japanese print.

The fuzzy balls of the acacia tree, like the breast of a baby chick, knocked at the latticed windowpanes.

Her tongue clenched between her small white teeth, Dotty was struggling with an eraser and a pencil.

So intent was she that she did not see the slim, curly-haired young man who stood in the French doorway watching her with narrowed eyes.

At last he said: "What in the name of all that is pious are you doing, Dotty?"

Dorothy Vicente jumped, swore, and then squealed. "Gene, God love your old soul. How are you? Where you been? Come here and give me a big kiss. My, it's good to see you! I've been crazy to see you for days. The way you neglect me is something terrible. I know. You've been chasing one of these doll-faced ingénues. I'm getting old, I suppose. I heard you were flying around with Flo Riddel. Well, I never was as young as she is the day I was born."

The young man grinned amiably. The youth of his face was torn by lines, lines of mental stress or of overwork, and at close inspection his clothes were a bit shabby.

"You're such a liar, Dotty," he said. "For three weeks I've been phoning here every day. I'd as soon try to catch the north wind as you. I come here—Miss Vicente has gone to the studio. I go to the studio—Miss Vicente is not coming down today. I phone—Miss Vicente is just stepping into her bath. Oh, Dotty, Dotty, as a friend you're a total loss."

"I am not. I—there isn't anything in the world I wouldn't do for you."

"Except keep an engagement with me once in a while."

She made a face at him, an impudent, altogether adorable face, and he said, "Dotty, you want to see something?"

"Uh-huh."

From the inner pocket of his coat he took something carefully wrapped in tissue paper.

With hands that trembled just a little he took off the covering.

Inside was a small square of wrapping paper. That paper had come originally from the butcher's, and Gene—broke, and out of drawing paper—had rescued it from a trash basket. Now it was carefully framed in cardboard. But from that paper looked up the most exquisite reproduction of Dorothy Vicente's face. Only—only—it wasn't Dorothy Vicente.

The eyes were there—the great, gleaming, gorgeous pools of light with their gold-tipped lashes. The soft brown hair. The upcurled mouth. But the expression was different. All different. Not only the expression but the whole development, the whole meaning of the face. It was as though a great artist had taken a face from its earth pathway and drawn it as it might have been upon a different road. As it should have been.

For it was not only a lovely face. Fine. Noble. Selfless.

"Oh, Gene!"

"Do you like it?" The man's eyes were flaming as they looked down at the small square of wrapping paper.

They held the light that is in a man's eyes only when he looks into the face of the woman he loves.

It was not there when he looked at Dotty Vicente.

At least, not all of it. Its ghost, maybe.

Her throat was working, but like a flash she turned on him. "You—you old Tut, you. When you can do things like that, to be hiding in a garret, wasting your time making posters and ads for these swine. Never letting anybody know what you can do. Oh, Gene, it's a crime! With a gift like yours! Will you do a portrait of me and let me buy it from you and exhibit it? You know you'd get all kinds of orders from people and you'd be rich and famous. Please, you old buzzard."

"Paint a portrait of you and let you buy it to give to Max Franklin?" He laughed. "I ought to paint him a picture of you sometime. Of the you—he wants. The you—he sees."

"Little third act music, please, Mr. Leader," said Dotty with a grin. "Have a drink, Gene?"

"No. Besides, Dotty, I'm afraid as sin of money and fame. I've watched. They do something to people unless they're really big enough and fine enough to deserve them. Well, never mind. How are you, Dots? You look so thin. What were you doing?"

Dotty giggled. "I was changing price tags," she said, and in a moment her bright laughter spilled and fluttered and danced into every corner of the room. "I'm sending mama and my kid sisters a lot of junk, and—well, mama'd die if she ever knew how much they cost. If she knew I paid five hundred bucks for a coat for Mamie, she'd never let her wear it. She'd put it in a glass case and charge her friends admission."

"Did she ever know you gave a five thousand dollar cape to a girl on a street corner in New York because she was cold?"

"Do you know any more funny jokes like that?" asked Dotty, but the color had flung into her cheeks. "Anyway, I got a brother that's a first-class mechanic—I made him go through the engineering school—and mama's a lot prouder of him than she is of me. My sister is going to get married this spring and I'm buying her a trousseau. Gee, it's a swell one."

"Don't you wish you were buying it for yourself, Dorothy?"

"I do not. I'll remain an unclaimed blessing until I pass out of the picture. All a gal needs when she gets on that white dress and the lilies in her hand and a bridal expression on her face is some silver handles and the band would start to play the funeral march instead of Miss Lohengrin's little cakewalk."

"Then there's still no chance for me?"—casually.

"Some day I'll take you up on one of these bum proposals you're always making and then everything would be all wet. Imagine being married to me!"



"It's a case," Aunt Linny chuckled. "Sometimes seems like I got two babies to watch after 'stead of one."

"Then I'd paint, Dotty. Then I'd be rich and famous. I'd do—something marvelous."

"I shouldn't be surprised. Let your hair grow long and wear a bow tie. And paint a picture of a caterpillar eating watermelon rind and call it 'The Coronation of the Fairy Queen.' I know."

But Gene only looked at her. "Dotty, are you still in love with Max? After all—after all these years?"

"Yes. Oh, what's the use of talking about it? I've always been in love with him. I guess I always will be. He's a low-lived son of a gun in lots of ways, but women like me love—in

spite of things. I can't explain, you know. But I belong to him. Always. I just love him, that's all. Sometimes I wish——"

"I know."

"What can I do, Gene? I've loved him ever since I was fifteen. I'm twenty-six now. And I'll live to be a hundred, I suppose, and he'll leave me when I get old—and he'll cheat always—but——"

"I don't mind anything except what he does to you. Laugh if you want to, but I know what you could have been. I know everything about you, Dorothy, because I've loved you for ten

years. Not like the men who are always falling for you and buzzing around. I'd love you if you were blind and crippled and a million. I know you. Your mind, that's fine and beautiful. Your generous, foolish, warm heart. Your unselfishness. Your genius. And all sunk—"

"You're a bit off, dear, but I'm grateful. Only don't go raving around Hollywood like that or they'll give you a free ride."

"I'm not off. If you'd married me—or some decent man—and had some kids, you'd be the finest girl on earth. People would look up to you. But that wasn't what he wanted. No. He wanted you to be low enough and common enough to be a fit companion for him. And he didn't care what he did to make you like that."

"You made me what I am today," trilled Dotty. "Gene, you have missed your vocation. You should write scenarios."

"You know the life of every fifteen year old girl depends on the man she falls in love with."

"Hurrah! Now come on and find babykins and we'll take a dip. My private opinion is that you need something to cool your head off."

She flew out of the long French doors with that elfin grace of hers. As the blaze of summer sun fell upon her, Gene realized with an inward pang how terribly thin she was.

In the flaming riot of the garden, an enormously fat colored woman in immaculate white greeted them amiably.

"Where's my baby?" demanded Dorothy Vicente.

The colored woman nodded, with a vast chuckle.

In the corner of a carpet of marigolds hung a large cage, painted bright green.

Before it stood a very small girl in a very small red bathing suit. Her rosy face was screwed into intense concentration and she and the large green parrot who occupied the cage were seriously engaged in attempting to stare each other out of countenance. Her stomach stuck out in exact imitation of

a kewpie and her pink heels were pressed ruthlessly upon the marigolds.

Dotty Vicente crept softly behind her and put her hands over the baby eyes. "Guess," she said in a deep voice.

The tiny figure stood motionless. At last, "It's Moms," she said and turned grave eyes upon them.

Gene came and shook hands with her. "Hello," he said. "How are you?"

"All right"—slowly. She regarded him for some seconds without expression. Then, "Have you got any gum?"

Dotty shrieked. "Babykins, how many times have I told you little ladies don't chew gum?"

The baby considered. "All right," said she solemnly. "Leth go swimming. I would like Moms to go swimming. An' Aunt Linny, too."

The colored woman's musical chuckle filled the garden. "I reckon if I ever got in that pool they'd be a tidal wave. I'll watch this time, honey."

"I've got skates," said the child to Gene suddenly, her baby frown deepening, "an' a new bed wif pitchers on it. An' forty-leven dollies. An' two kittens an' a duck. He bites. Moms gived 'em to me."

"Moms is pretty good to you," said Gene. "Which do you like best?"

Instant embarrassment engulfed her. She wriggled and the curly head hung. Then, bravely, she raised her eyes to his. "I like Moms best," she said, "of anything."

"And I like you best of anything," said Dotty gravely. "And if you'll sit down on that sand pile and give me your five pink toes, I'll tell you a story about five squirrels playing in the sun."

They became absorbed.

Gene's eyes met the twinkling black ones of Aunt Linny.

"It's a case," she chuckled at him. "Everything in this whole house got to run round that child now, I tell you. And sometimes



"I love my baby an awful lot," said Dotty Vicente. "I'm—not good, but I thought maybe—"



seems to me like I got two babies to watch after 'stead of one, when them two get to cutting capers and mud pies and all."

"And now that we've settled that," said Dotty Vicente, "if you'll wait a couple of quacks, I'll go swimming with you myself and I'll show you how the crocodile swam in the great gray-green greasy Limpopo River, and Gene can be the Elephant's Child. How's that?"

"And Aunt Linny, you go get me a little drink, will you?"

Max Franklin picked up a richly engraved edition of John Masfield, opened a page or two, flung it back on the table.

Then he said with quiet violence: "Where is Dotty? I must see her. Look here, Rose, I know perfectly well what you've been to Dotty. I don't know what she would have done in the past few years without you. But don't try to interfere between her and me or—you'll see something that'll surprise you."

Rose did not answer, regarding the round, slightly graying head. The finely cut, steady lips. The slightly hawk-like nose. The heavy, well groomed figure.

The motion picture industry knew Max Franklin as a shrewd, successful producer of high class pictures. Hollywood knew him as an intellectual sensualist, and those who had no need to fear him hated him. Yet he was a pleasant enough person, quiet and well mannered and with keen perception. It was a little difficult to explain his unpopularity.

Men resented the fact that women liked him. Felt something unclean in such a liking. Yet all women, even the best of them, did like him. More than that, they had a tremendous curiosity about him. There was something in his eyes that puzzled them, excited them. A challenge. The unknown quantity.

A thinly veiled brutality hidden somewhere in that commonplace personality.

A rather small man. American born and reared. Originally a small time vaudeville magician. But the touch of Hungarian blood, of a Balkan ancestor or two, seemed to infuse a vaguely Oriental strain.

A pleaser of women in little things. A man who would kiss the bruises his fist made. A man who would let a woman do her own washing and then bring her a bunch of violets on Saturday night.

As he stood within the circle of light from the inverted chandelier, he looked an ordinary, not unattractive man in middle life who could easily pass unnoticed in any crowd. And Rose was at a loss to place the menace—the cold menace—that filled the place.

"I'm not trying to interfere, Max," she said placatingly. "But Dotty's not fit to see anybody."

"I know. She's been drinking again. Why wasn't she at the studio today?"

"She was ill. Very ill. You took her to that party last night yourself. You——" Rose stopped, then went on courageously: "You let her drink when she goes out to play with you. You shouldn't."

"Ah—Max—if we could only get a kick out of the things that are good and yet make you happy."

The man shrugged. "Don't be ridiculous, my dear Rose. A few cocktails. A glass of wine. Does that mean I expect her to get drunk and try to climb the palms in the Coconut Grove?"

"You—you shouldn't let her drink at all, Max. She'll do anything you say. And—Dotty isn't a half-way person in anything. That's her nature. But—sometimes I think she sui s you better when she's had a few drinks."

"Bah! All you old maids are a bit off. You mustn't be melodramatic, Rose. Now go and tell Dotty I want to see her."

The dark girl went slowly upstairs. Her feet dragged.

Half an hour later Dotty Vicente slid down the banisters.

In the shaded light her face showed none of the ravages that had startled Rose in the noonday sunshine. Joy had brought a rose to her cheeks. But it was her eyes that gave her beauty now, as they gave it to her on the screen. The rest of her was not unusual. A small mouth that curled at the corners from much laughing. A pile of brown hair with lights in it.

Her eyes were like the eyes of no one else on earth.

Long and wide open and as deep and dark as the most glorious sealskin. Enormous eyes that held you, with their merriment and their tragedy. You could look down into them and drown in the essence of every emotion womankind has ever known.

About them, the long, curly lashes, coal-black against the white lids and tipped with a feathery gold.

He kissed her. And she pushed him into a big chair and perched on his knee. A maid came in with a tray.

"Another little drink wouldn't do us any harm," said Dotty gravely. "I need it. I've got whiskers down to my knees."

"Go get dressed, my jazz baby. There's a party up at Jack Medford's I want to take you to." (Continued on page 118)

SOFT-BOILED NEW YORK



IN NEW YORK, Reuben does not come to town. He lives here. Remove the spats and monocle and behold the apple-knocker.

The specious reasoning of New Yorkers that a silk hat and stiff white shirt make the city slicker is as fallacious as another idea that any place west of Hoboken is Main Street.

Not all the suckers are out on Iowa farms busting sod or fashioning the wise crack in front of the village store. Any number may be found preening themselves before plate glass windows along Fifth Avenue and Times Square.

A voodoo doctor flourishes in the aristocratic core of Park Avenue and an East Indian swami occupies an imposing suite of offices within a stone's throw of the downtown money kings.

The artificial lake in Central Park is owned by the City and fishing is not permitted there. It contains very few fish anyway, but there is a fellow who sells "fishing privileges" to New Yorkers and who makes a comfortable living doing it.

In a Broadway storeroom in the heart of the district where sophistication fairly pirouettes and the celluloid collar raises the uproarious guffaw, a bucolic looking gentleman with wide-brimmed hat and bandanna kerchief at his throat is selling stock in a company that "extracts" oil from pebbles.

Around the corner in the Roaring Forties a falcon-eyed street merchant is selling "Montana diamonds, as big as your eye. Step up, boys!" Across from Bryant Park at dusk another hawks the "mysterious package"—a one cent collar button—for fifteen cents.

If you ask the brown-derbied and shiny serged "pitch men" who sell trifling gimcracks along the curb, they will tell you New York is the biggest sucker town in America—a paradise for those who live by their wits. Easier than county fairs.

It is not the wide-eyed stranger from Sinking Springs who pays ten dollars a seat for a two dollar musical comedy. Nor is it the stranger who pays a four dollar *couvert* gouge to occupy a chair in a claw hammer and caviar jazz mosque.

Café prices in New York are an amazing tribute to native yokelery. The man about town and the "fellow in the know" are the debonair lads who never complain at the two dollar charge for a fifteen cent bottle of table water—corkage extra.

The capricious cuties who live by their ability to find the "live one" do not angle for visiting Babbitts. They know the

easy marks and they flush them out of the man-made niches in Manhattan cliffs.

The longer one lives in the mightiest of cities the more one realizes all the pockets are not picked at the expense of the bumpkins who stand agape at the wonders of the Aquarium or the Bronx zoo.

Not by a jugful!

Mammoth hotels have their cafeterias, apart from main dining rooms but in the same buildings, where identically the same food is served at almost half the price.

These cafeterias are patronized exclusively by visitors. New Yorkers would never think of going there. No siree! The help might see them.

A la-de-dah soda fountain on Fifth Avenue that charges forty cents for a glass of soda water does not even offer comfortable surroundings. There are no chairs, and clerks skilled in impudence greet the visitors. But try to get up to the counter.

Just try, anyway, during a rush. It serves no better soda, and certainly in less comfort, than the fifteen cent places. Still, Mrs. Vanastor was seen there once.

Mental tinkers who juggle with the complexes are right in saying New York is swayed by the "herd instinct."

If just a few beat the trail to an unknown door the rest will follow blindly on the gallop. No matter whether the trail leads to a gyping café or a signless shop where clerks drop their *h's*.

There is no place where the herd instinct is so pronounced as in a New York dansant. The smallest places are invariably packed. They may be in an innocent looking East Side residence or a Greenwich Village cellar. No matter where—the postage stamp dance floors are jammed to suffocation.

There is scarcely room for the policeman or revenue agent any more. Yet the "great open spaces" of the big dance halls where

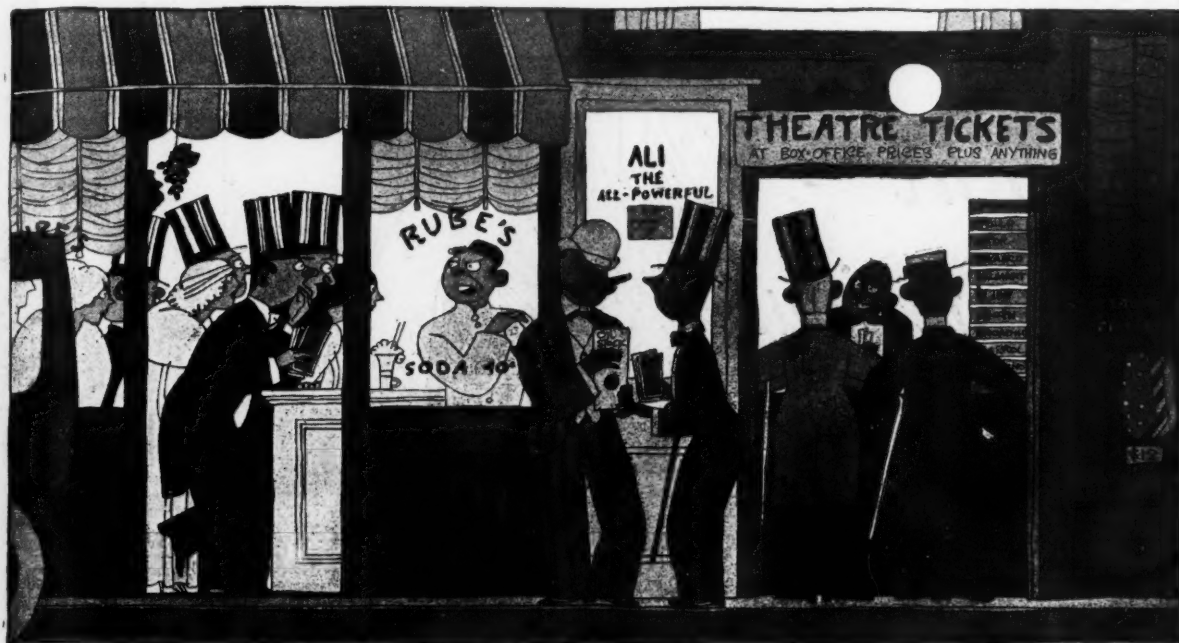
one may dance in comfort are almost ghostly in their emptiness.

When a dance place begins to lose popularity, the shrewd proprietor knows how to steam up business again. He redecorates, boosts his prices, and the sheep come tumbling back.

The smug New Yorker is amusing in his obeisance to swank, and swank to him is sky-high prices. The man who pays \$100 for an opening night seat to the Follies has something to talk



Remove the spats and monocle—



about—a high spot to which he may refer. He has taken on a brisk new importance.

One of the highest priced tailors in town offers clothes that are made by the same cutters and fitters that supply a Grand Street tailor's patrons at less than half the price. The only difference is that the Grand Street place is one flight up and the Fifth Avenue shop is called a "salon."

A "salon" is somewhat like an aria on a bull fiddle. It may sound impressive but does not mean a thing.

Where save in New York would a long suffering populace stand for the hat-snatching brigands and impertinent ruffians who remove imaginary bits of dust in wash rooms? Business of pausing for reply!

In other cities and communities a dime is a sizable fee for this somewhat annoying imposition. Yet in New York the dime brings the lip-curling sneer and the whispered epithet.

The head waiter at best is a glorified serf, but New Yorkers fairly grovel in his presence. He becomes the Tsar of the silken entrance ropes, and New Yorkers aching for his austere bow of recognition will gladly ease the itching palm with a yellowback note—from a twenty spot to a century.

It is not the out-of-towner who carries favor with the head waiter and elevates him to the niche of grandeur wherein he rides to his work from his up-the-Hudson castle in a limousine. It is the New Yorker freighted with his metropolitan air of worldliness. He is the same New Yorker who smiles superiorly when the village oaf is trapped for a dollar and a half in a circus shell game.

Nearly all the spurious paintings of the Old Masters are sold on Manhattan Island. Painted perhaps by some attic starveling for the price of a few filling meals, they are taken to Europe, brought back with a fanfare of press agency and then sold for thousands. And this is not your cheap flimflam game but one in which millions are exacted every year.

The biggest wire-tapping fraud ever perpetrated in America had as its victims four native New Yorkers who were so gullible they mortgaged mansions to bet on the most ancient of con games—the fixed horse race.

Then there are the ocean greyhounds who travel on transatlantic liners to fleece the credulous at cards. Here are men adept at picking the "sucker." They play with him as skillfully

as the best of fishermen, and then at the psychological moment—the hook.

There is no record of an ocean greyhound ever singling out a tourist from Hickory Corners. The cosmopolite is his meat.

Slim Doran, one of the shrewdest of the confidence ilk, after years of rich pickings in Gotham decided he wanted new worlds to conquer. He would go out in the brush and scare up his victims. He had that polished way of his vaselined world of Broadway. He knew how to order from French menus, to have the wine at the proper temperature and wear clothes like a Beau Brummell.

Slim met his Waterloo at Omaha—the first stop out. He left there in two days for the East, riding the rods of a baggage coach—plucked clean.

Fortune tellers and crystal gazers reap their biggest rewards in million-footed Manhattan. An illiterate woman who professes to foretell the future by gazing into coffee grounds owns a block of apartment houses in Jersey. And Oom the Omnipotent had the cream of the Social Register under his mystic sway.

Snake doctors still beat the tom-tom on Fourteenth Street, and Columbus Circle has its gold brick artists.

The crudest sort of "yokel yanking" in New York is done by the itinerant fur salesmen. They dress as truckmen and stand in shadowed doorways after nightfall. By whispered implications they give the idea their furs have been stolen from trucks.

In this way they palm off five dollar furs for thirty dollars. So tremendous has this graft grown that there is an organized central exchange on Canal Street from which men are sent out and which employs several hundred pseudo-salesmen. Always their victim is the New Yorker—the wise-cracking slicker.

There is a record of two New Yorkers "purchasing" Brooklyn Bridge, and one trusting soul invested all his cash for a first payment down on the Woolworth Building.

So it goes. Beggars ride in limousines and live in swell hotels. Fake lords, dukes and counts crash the social cordon with nothing save an engraved calling card with a faked family crest. Millionaires are hooked by vapid chorus girls, and Wall Street yearly cries its warning against the "bucket shop."

This is hard-boiled New York. In truth, as soft as soap. As impressionable as the modeler's clay.

It is "Jaytown-on-the-Hudson."



—and behold the apple-knocker.

GEORGE WESTON
Invites You to Read the Story

of
The
Mysterious
Woman

Illustrations by
Wallace Morgan



YOU know how it is in large families—how the children split into little cliques and regard the rest of the folks with a feeling that isn't far from downright hostility? Well, that's the way it was with the Wilsons.

"You can't come with us——"

"You go and find Joe; he's got to mind you——"

"We'll walk on slow till we get to the next corner; and then we'll run and lose her!"

Most everyone from the good old days will know how the thing was done.

There were six children in the Wilson family when Jill was born, and none of the others was any too keen to mind the baby. She took some minding, too, being one of those active young ones who are born for adventure as surely as birds are born to have feathers grow on them. They lived in Longview, a suburb of New York, and one day, feeling herself neglected by the rest of the family, little Jill picked a handful of tulips and started out for the great city of which she had heard so much. A policeman brought her home that night at eight o'clock, sleepy but satisfied, a mysterious box of candy under her arm. They hushed it up as well as they could, afraid that it would get into the papers, and after that the other children weren't so smart in trying to lose little sister.

Not that Jill cared. Truth to tell, she had already grown beyond them.

With every breath she drew, her adventurous spirit burned brighter. They had a goat next door and Jill liked to sneak up to the fence with a stick and rap it over the horns, and when it said "Blah!" she tried to rap it again. Trees were nothing to her; hills were made to be rolled down; getting late to school was a joke; and notes from teacher became so common that she often had to stop to think whether or not she had brought one home inside the paper cover of her arithmetic.

When Jill was seven, she found that she could achieve a pleasing sense of excitement by drawing a full breath and running across the street directly in front of a horse and wagon, and once while she was acquiring one of these sweet jags of danger, a fire engine truck ran over her. At first they thought she was dead, but sparks of life like Jill's are hard to extinguish.

At eight, while the painters were working on the house, she fell off the roof during a circus parade and when they rushed forward, white-faced and shaken, to carry her to the hospital, they found her hurrying up the ladder again in order not to miss the line of elephants.

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It was when she was nine, though, that three really great events happened in her life, and all within the same half-hour. Robert Terriss kicked her in the eye; she got very drunk on rhubarb wine; and her brother Wib was born.

Taking one thing at a time, Master Robert Terriss lived on the Post Road in one of those fashionable mansions which song writers generally assume to be filled with aching hearts—though only Heaven knows why. The land itself was worth a fortune, about twenty acres, landscaped and planted fit for the setting of a king; but note this carefully, if you please—even as most rich folks have poor relations, so do most fine properties have lowly neighbors, and in the rear of the Terriss place was the house where Jill was born. Between the two demesnes was an iron fence which would have discouraged most adults, but Jill hadn't been on her legs long when she found a place where she could squeeze in between two of the bars, and whenever she felt particularly adventurous she would wiggle through and come back after a mysterious interval, bearing spoils of war—fruit or flowers that had taken her fancy. It was on one of these excursions that she first saw Bob Terriss.

He was twenty-one years old at the time; and when Jill clapped eyes on him, he was practicing drop kicks. There is no age quite so magnificent, quite so godlike, as twenty-one, and Jill hadn't been watching him long when she had her first attack of hero worship, an attack which was at least temporarily interrupted by the ball suddenly catching her on the side of the nose and knocking her over backward. The next thing she knew, Bob had jumped through the bushes and was picking her up.

"Why, you poor little kid!" he said. "I'd no idea anybody was there. Did it hurt you?"



"Take it from me," Miss Morey was saying as Jill entered, "that girl's no chicken—"
 "Darned old cats!" thought Jill.

Jill slowly shook her head, loath for the moment to come to an end. His hair, she noticed, grew divinely to a point in the middle of his forehead. His voice was wonderful music and thrummed certain little chords in her chest that made her feel tender and hopeful—yes, and thrilled her far, far more deliciously than running in front of the horses and wagons.

"I'm 'fraid it did," he said, "though you're a good little sport to say it didn't. You live around here?"

"In back," she told him, and hated the roughness of her voice.

"Come through the fence?" She nodded. "All right. Now you run home and tell them to soak cold water on it. Wait a moment, though. You mustn't forget your flowers."

Suddenly a big sob shook her. "Now you run home" had done it. It sounded like a rebuke, after so much tenderness.

"Tut-tut-tut," said Bob, and picking her up because she looked so miserable, he lightly kissed the place where the ball had hit her. "There," he said. "That'll make it better."

It was five minutes later when Jill discovered the bottle of rhubarb wine in their haymow. It didn't look dangerous—it looked like lemon soda—and not being able to speak more than one word, it didn't tell what it was, any more than it told who had sneaked it out of the house and hidden it there in the hay for future consumption. Jill drew the cork and had a taste.

"M-m-m!" she said, and smacked her lips.

Still under the delusion that it was lemon soda, she tilted the bottle for the second time, and "Good—good—good" gurgled the contents into her mouth—gurgling so fast, indeed, that she nearly choked herself. She started to laugh then and kicked up her heels in the hay.

"Going in now and get a piece of cake," she said. "I—I ain't scared of old Mis' Pfeffer."

For some obscure reason, old Mrs. Pfeffer had been in charge of the Wilson ménage that week, and when Jill presented herself at the back door a minute later, whistling "Annie Rooney," the old lady pounced on her like a fat old tabby on a very young robin.

"Sh!" she cautioned. "You mustn't disturb your mommer. She is trying to go to sleep."

"She is not!" said Jill, all at once grown bellicose. "My mama doesn't go to sleep in the daytime."

"I tell you she is. She is all tired out."

"She is not. She has been in bed all week."

From upstairs came a long, thin, bitter, wailing cry—that ineffectual protest which seems to say "What have you brought me here for, into such a world of woe?"

"What's that?" asked Jill, cocking her ear.

"That's your little brother. Would you like to see him?"

A little brother! And crying already like that! There was something so sad in his lamentations that Jill found her own nose smarting and—call it premonition or what you will—a few moments later she had lifted up her voice to join her brother's, and was crying as though her heart would break.

The baby was named Wibley, and whether despite or because of their mutual tears on the day he was born, he and Jill soon formed a tight little gang of their own.

As Wib grew older he idolized his sister—walked like her, shook the hair out of his eyes like she did, threw overhand, hated rice pudding without raisins like she did, stole fruit with her, and more than once played hookey with her, than which no more enduring tie can exist between two young ones.

One thing, though—Wib never had as much nerve as his sister, but to hear him tell it, he had her beaten a mile; a handsome

The Mysterious Woman

youngster, no matter what his faults—handsome and with something dramatic about him. As his trousers lengthened, he liked to walk in the house and say something startling, and after a while it was expected of him; so that if he came home and hadn't seen a horse run away, or a man arrested, or something like that, Jill thought how quiet he was, and uneasily wondered if anything was bothering him.

Jill was fourteen when she had her second adventure with Bob Terriss. One Sunday afternoon she was taking Wib for a walk down the Post Road, and just as they reached the Terriss place a queer looking vehicle came swinging out of the driveway and nearly bowled them over. Bob jammed his brakes on and the car skidded on the gravel, so that when it came to rest, broadside on, he found himself very close to Made-moiselle Jill. At that period of her life she wore her hair over her shoulders in a rippling waterfall and looked like Alice in Wonderland.

She didn't talk like Alice, though—her precious Wib having been in danger.

"Darned old fool!" she had begun—and then saw who it was.

"Sorry," said Bob, looking at her hard. "Seems to me I know you, but I can't quite place you—"

"Angela Wilson," Jill announced herself, "and a long time ago you kicked me in the eye—down there—with a football."

"Well, I'll be blessed!" said Bob, and this time he beamed just as hard as he had looked before, for when all's said and done there aren't many girls who wear their hair like that and look like Alice in Wonderland. "Where are you going?"

"Oh, just for a walk," she said.

"Come on up, then, and go for a ride instead."

Cars weren't built then as they are now, and when he said "Come on up," he meant it. Wib went up first and then Jill. "Chug-chug-chug," said the engine, and off they went.

"You aren't afraid of going fast?" asked Bob.

"I love it!" she told him, and had you been there you might have noticed that her color was acting as speedometer—the higher the speed, the brighter the pink.

They came to a quiet stretch of road and he opened the throttle. Wib flinched—but not Jill! They came to a hill, and down—down—down they flew!

"Hold tight!" shouted Bob.

At the bottom was a turn, and when the car leaned over on two wheels, Wib cried out, "We're going over!" and clung to his sister's arm. But did Jill cry out? She did not! She felt a wonderful glow run over her, and when the car put its other two wheels on the road and began to behave again, she laughed a little, and her eyes were bright, and her cheeks were red and her lips were parted.

Driving more slowly then and secretly getting his own breath back, Bob glanced at the radiant young figure on the other end of the seat—looked, and wondered, and looked again.

"You're a regular little sport; do you know it?" he asked.

She smiled at him, remembering very well that he had once said that before.

"How old are you?"

"Fourteen."

His next remark was slow in coming, but when you think it over, it was about the nicest thing he could have told her.

"I wish I had a sister like you."

A sister! Jill might have been only fourteen, but she could hardly keep an unsatisfied feeling out of her mind, even while she smiled.

It was this same year when Jill came to that queer time of her life which all girls reach sooner or later, when they mustn't do this and they mustn't do that because it isn't ladylike.

Trees? She couldn't even look at a tree. Run? No, she mustn't run; she might fall down, forsooth! Go to fires? Not unless someone was with her. Roll down Brown-ing's hill? Jill, what are you thinking of? A great big girl like you!

Thus thwarted in the flesh, she did what most folks do, she adventured in the spirit. She filled out a card at the Longview Public Library and gradually made up a list of things which she was going either to do or see or have as soon as she was a few years older.

A considerable line of broken hearts at home—necessarily broken because she was always going to stay single and look after Wib. Then followed a trip to Europe with Wib, a cruise of the Mediterranean, winter sports in Switzerland, shooting a lion somewhere just as it was going to spring on Wib, a real grand duke, a ditto prince who would fall in love with her, helplessly but hopelessly. She would be the acknowledged queen of any roost that she happened to hop on . . .

Every girl who's a bit like Jill will remember some such dreams.

Much of what she read she soon forgot; but now and then a passage or a

character would take up permanent quarters in her mind. There was such a thought in "Mrs. Templeton's Temptation." "The future walks always with us, masked and hooded like a mysterious woman, so that none can see her. And well it is for most of us that her face is thus concealed, for although for some it may have a radiant glow, if the others could only see what is hidden behind that veil, what lonely eyes and sadness of disillusion—they would soon be tempted to ask themselves, 'What's the use?' and cease all further effort."

This made Jill shudder a little, but always after that whenever she wished to conjure up the vision, she could imagine her Mysterious Woman walking along with her, or sitting by her side, masked and hooded like an allegorical figure in a play.

When she was twenty, her father died. One by one her older brothers and sisters had left home, and now her mother



W. MORGAN
"Throw up your hands!" said Jill in her deepest voice, to—

started keeping boarders—an easy-going woman, fat and pretty, who liked to be admired—one of those women with plaintive voices and delicate manners who are nearly always in debt. Jill helped for a few years, and then one morning she nailed the following flag to her masthead, "No More Boarders for Me!" and started learning typewriting instead.

"My dear child," said old Mr. Levy of the Longview Business Academy, "you are quick, yes; I give you credit. But a leetle less fortissimo on the typewriter, if you please—a leetle less hammer-hammer-hammer on the keyboard and you will get there just as soon!"

With a spirit like that you can't keep a good girl down. The ink was hardly dry on Jill's diploma when she landed a job at the Longview Trust Company.

Wib meanwhile was growing into one of those smashing good-lookingers who are too handsome for their own good. Fortunately for his own peace of mind the girls chased him so hard that he grew disgusted with them and often told Jill that he would never marry. So it was settled that they should live together all their lives, and whenever some amorous young goat down at the Trust Company tried to cut up any of his capricious capers around Jill she rapped him good and proper on his silly young horns.

She and Wib made wonderful plans together. "Some day before I'm thirty," he told her once, "we'll go and have a look at Honolulu, and China, and Japan, and all those places—"

Jill believed him, too, although even while she was listening to him a painful little thought was twitching in her mind. "By the time you're thirty, I shan't be far from forty," she was thinking. "I'm getting on for thirty now."

"As soon as I've made some money," he told her another time, "we'll have a winter cottage in Florida and everything like that."

Jill believed this as well. She stayed at the Trust Company four years, after which she moved over to the law office of Smith & Terriss—which wasn't Bob Terriss, but his Uncle Philemon. Wib had been talking rather vaguely of becoming a lawyer, and in the same vague manner perhaps Jill thought she would pave the way. And there was another two dollars a week.

And then one evening after dinner the blow fell. Wib drew a photograph out of his pocket and rather awkwardly handed it to his sister.

"Who's this?" she asked.

"That's Edith," said Wib, coloring. "Edith Swanson . . . Do you like her?"

Jill's voice, when she next spoke, might have reminded you dimly of the peep of a chicken getting lost in the grass.

"Who is she?" she asked.

"My girl."

"Does she—live around here?"

"No; I met her in New York last winter. Her brother's going to get me a job down there . . . I tell you, Jill, I'm sick of it here, anyhow—the way Mom's always broke—and making eyes at the boarders—"

You remember the schemes of childhood? "We'll walk on slow till we get to the next corner, and then we'll run and lose her . . ." Every girl who has mothered a Wib will know how poor Jill felt.

One month, two months, three months passed; and then on a certain fine October morning, if you had seen Jill tapping at her typewriter, you might very well have thought to yourself: "Now here's a girl who attends strictly to business. Too bad there aren't a few more like her."

But you would probably be surprised if you could know the thoughts which sometimes pass through a girl's mind.

"Dear Sirs," Jill's fingers were tapping: "Replying to your letter of the 15th."

Yet all the time she was telling herself one of those truths which come to us all if we but live long enough. "I'm getting old—old—old," she was thinking to herself, "and nothing has ever happened to me."

By which she meant—but never mind. You probably know what she meant.

"We enclose herewith," continued her fingers, "a copy of the stipulation requested—"

"A few years more," continued her thoughts, "and it will be too late. But what can I do to make things different?"

As long as she had felt sure of Wib, you understand, Romance hadn't particularly appealed to her; but a few days after he had

showed her Edith's picture, she had come across one of those tables, which were very likely compiled by the Devil himself, showing a girl's chances of matrimony at different ages, and it had struck her with a shock that she was already on the toboggan, the abyss not far ahead.

"Of course I'm not dead yet," she had tried to assure herself. "but if this darned thing's true, I've only got half as much chance as I had a couple of years ago, and in another two years . . ." Towhich she presently added, "Oh, fish; there's lots of time yet!"

For the next few weeks, though, moved perhaps by prehistoric impulse, she had kept her eyes open and, figuratively speaking, looked attentively around her for any of those signs by which a girl knows that she's wanted. All that she got, however, was a message from Mr. Terriss, one of the members of the firm—Old Flubby, as she had long since named him, partly because he was fat and bald and puffy, with a disappearing wife somewhere in Europe; and partly because he had always taken one of those fatherly interests in her which most

girls grow to understand as they go through life's experiences. "Silly old fool!" she told herself. "Somebody really ought to spank him!"

Again and again she looked around her; and again and again Old Flubby was all she got.

"Perhaps it's because I'm beginning to look old," she told herself one night in her room. "Of course it isn't so noticeable with short skirts, but when they come in long again—"



—the most astonished man
in Longview that night.

She tried to get the effect by standing in front of her mirror and slipping her skirt down to her shoe tops, but this showed too much white equator. So she draped a couch cover around her instead, and held her hair back to show the ears.

She looked like a startled old jack rabbit trying to hop out of a rug. "Good night! Good night!" she told herself with a surge of dismay. "If I ever look like this—"

She didn't sleep any too well that night, a certain masked and hooded figure continually waking her up.

The next week another drop of water came splashing down to wear away the stone. She had been in the inside office taking dictation and when she came out the other girls suddenly stopped talking, by which of course she knew that they had been talking about her. But just before the talk snuffed out, one last remark flared up and lighted the previous chatter.

"Take it from me," Miss Morey was saying, "that girl's no chicken—"

For the moment Jill hated them. They both dropped their eyes in a guilty manner, knowing well they had been caught.

"Darned old cats!" thought Jill; and voicing a thought which wears white whiskers and a sanctimonious air, she added, "That's one thing I like about men—they never knock each other . . ."

Heh!

Which is being told at considerable length because sooner or later every unmarried girl will go through a time like this.

And now we come to the hard part.

As long as folks stay young, they only need hope and some day all the world will belong to them. "I'll have a car like that some day"—"I'll be rich like that some day"—"I'll go traveling like that some day." And a man may keep up his dreams as long as he lives, only needing hope and a chance to strike it rich before he dies. But with a girl, it's different. In the life of a girl there are perhaps ten golden years when she can stand on the mountain and see the whole world before her, but when she once strikes the inclined plane!

Jill thought it over—the burden of her reflection being, "I'm getting old . . . old . . . old . . ." and such is the power of mind over body that when she got up on the morning to which we have now arrived, she wasn't far from feeling old. She had one of those pains in the back which girls seldom like to acknowledge even to themselves, and underneath each eye was just the least suspicion of a puffy look—a look which she bitterly described to herself as "darned old bags." It may have been these which stirred her to action. From out of her bottom drawer, where a girl keeps most of her secrets and souvenirs, she drew Madame Cleo's Beauty Hints and Facial Massage, and whether or not it was Diagram No. 17 or the cold water with which she washed herself, by the time she was dressed the usual color had come back to her cheeks, and the darned old bags were gone.

The usual color? If you had been there, you would probably have said that there was more than that—that there was even a fighting color. And now perhaps you will understand how she felt later in the morning as she sat at her typewriter tapping away "We are sending you under separate cover," and thinking to herself, "But what can I do—what can I do to make things different?"

As though in answer, the door of the inside office opened and Flubby put his head out. "Busy, Miss Wilson?" he asked.

"No, sir; nothing that can't wait."

You ought to have seen the other girls—how intent upon their work they were!

"Will you—ah—take a few letters for me, please?"

Jill noticed that he had a flower in his buttonhole, and that he was giving her one of those creamy looks which every girl knows so well. "Darned old fool!" she started to tell herself; but then for some strange reason she checked the thought; and thoughtfully, very thoughtfully, she patted her hair, and felt her belt, and picked up her pencil and pad.

According to popular theory, the inside office of a modern firm is a place where supermen carry on their daily tasks as though life and death depended on the issue. Executives with features of iron are supposed to sit at flat-top desks, silent, strong, sure of themselves, deciding great issues with a nod or a shake of the head—the wonder-men, in short, who long ago put the *ff* in efficiency and are never swerved for a moment from the strenuousness of their ways.

And yet if you could have followed Jill into the inside office of Smith & Terriss, you would have seen old Mr. Smith having his shoes shined and reading a morning paper, while Mr. Allison

and young Mr. Smith were discussing a tennis match. Jill paid no attention to these three, though, but went over to the other corner where Mr. Terriss had his desk.

It was a roll-top desk, a high one, and was so turned that when Jill sat down by the side of it, she and Flubby were fairly well screened from the others in the room.

He gave her a letter or two.

"Got that?" he asked every so often.

"Yes, sir," Jill answered.

"Good!" said he, and smiled at her as though for her skill.

The next letter on his pile was a teaser and he had to read it carefully. Jill, on the quiet, took a look at him then. In spite of his years and the promontory of his waistcoat, he was wearing a suit with a belt in the back and funny little tucks behind the sleeves; also a pair of sport shoes with rubber ringworms on the soles. He was, Jill guessed, going to play golf that afternoon. Looking through the window, she saw his car parked across the street, one of those fancy affairs which might have reminded you of some speedy old lady who had just come out of a beauty parlor, perfumed, bejeweled and upholstered to the nines. More than once when they had worked late at the office, Mr. Terriss had offered to take her home in this sumptuous affair, an invitation which Jill had never accepted, knowing very well what everybody would say at the boarding house if they ever saw her getting out of a car like that.

It was old Mr. Smith who broke the silence. "Well, I'll be hanged!" he suddenly piped out.

"What's the matter *now*?" asked Mr. Terriss.

"These hold-up men," said the old gentleman, his voice quivering partly with age and partly with indignation. "They're bad enough, I'm sure. But now I see there's a woman who has started doing it. A woman, mind you! What the dickens the country's coming to—Held up four men last night between here and Greenwich, and got away every time!"

This secretly tickled Jill, and though she might not have been willing to tell you why, it was probably at the thought of one of her own helpless sex putting it over four great men like that.

"I think I saw the headlines," said Old Flubby. "Woman in Yellow Mask." Wore a yellow scarf or something."

"That's the one, yes," quavered old Mr. Smith. "Not far from the golf club," it says here. You'd better be careful, Philemon. She may be shooting at you some night."

"Don't let that worry you," said Flubby in a meaning voice. "She wouldn't have to shoot. You think I'd risk my life to save a few dollars? No, sir. Any time that I'm held up, they can have all I've got. If I lose my money, I can make more; but if they shoot my ear off—"

Jill didn't think much of that, and on the quiet she made one of her curly noses. "No; and he wouldn't fight, either," she told herself. "He wouldn't have the nerve."

They went out to luncheon together, all but Mr. Terriss, who now began dictating to Jill again in a very fond key.

"You feel a draft from the window?" he asked once.

"No," said Jill.

Every girl who reads these lines will recognize an old friend.

"I'll shut it if you like," he said.

Jill felt like saying "Shut it and be darned for all I care!" But of course she didn't. "No, it's all right," she said in a false, lady-like voice. "I like the air."

"I thought you did," beamed Mr. Terriss, suddenly dropping the dictating and starting right in with the conversation. "How would you like to ride over to Ridgefield when you get through here this afternoon? Don't you think the air would do you good?"

For a moment she hesitated, and then she swallowed hard.

"I'm not dressed for it," she said, making a troubled little line of *p-b's* across her pad.

"How about tonight, then?" he asked, leaning over and reminding her of an earnest but pathetic old frog. "Give you time to dress and then you can meet me somewhere. Have a bite to eat and a nice long ride in the country. What do you say?"

Jill's voice grew faint. "I don't see how I can—very well. I'm expecting—friends—"

"That's all right," he assured her. "Phone me when your friends are gone. Beautiful night. Moonlight. Shame to miss it. I shall be at the golf club till eleven. I'll give you the number."

From his pocket he drew a wallet, as large as a baby brief case; and when he opened it, Jill couldn't help seeing that one of the sections was filled with a slice of money—a nice, crisp sandwich with plenty of nourishment in it.

"Here it is," he said, taking out a card. "Longview seven hundred."

Not to appear ungracious, Jill wrote it (Continued on page 155)



MARION DAVIES as the daring and Irish Patricia O'Day, who disguises herself as a boy in the Cosmopolitan film, "Little Old New York," adapted from Rida Johnson Young's play, with quaint settings by Joseph Urban.



LEONE MORGAN, who with no theatrical ancestors and no stage training rose from super to leading lady during the run of a single play, and who has returned to the footlights—for good, she says—after an absence of four years.

PHOTOGRAPH BY WHITE STUSSO



BETTY DUDLEY, whose picture tells better than any words could, why, for her first theatrical engagement, she has been chosen as one of the new beauties in that modern gallery of feminine loveliness, the Ziegfeld "Follies."

PHOTOGRAPHS BY IRA D. SCHWARTZ



NANCY WELFORD, a new "find" who is descended from four generations of stage folk and whose rise last season in the theatrical firmament, following her debut in "Cinders," was something like that of a meteor.

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Had Your Laugh Today? Read H. C. WITWER'S *Love and Learn*

Illustrations by J. W. McGurk

ONE of the other nights me and Hazel Killian, my girl friend, went to see an endless reel super-production called "Murdered in Fun!"—one of these movies where "the audience stood up and cheered," according to the advertisements. Well, about the middle of this deliberate insult to the adult intelligence, Hazel and me stood up and *jeered*, departing for the great outdoors with most of the other indignant patrons of the mute drama. Calling this magic lantern atrocity terrible would be giving it a boost, no fooling!

The scenario of "Murdered in Fun!" was remembered by a first-class maniac named Galahad O'Mercy and it had everything in it but the Johnstown Flood. It was one of these mystery pictures where suspicion is sprayed on everybody in the cast and then at the welcome finish you find out it was really the camera man who shot the old banker right in the library. But honestly I wasn't fooled a bit when the web of circumstance was wove around the hero, heroine, comedian, ingénue and so forth to make each appear to be the criminal. Personally, I suspected the producers of the film!

But speaking of detectives reminds me of Oliver Thurston, and what Oliver Thurston reminds me of I am much too ladylike to mention. However, after I tell you about him, maybe you can guess it.

Oliver Thurston bowed in and out of my life at the Hotel St. Moe, where I wound up as a telephone operator after finishing exactly first in a beauty contest at Bountiful, Utah, winning as a prize a ticket to California and a pass to all the studios where art comes in a one piece bathing suit. But female beauty in Los Angeles attracts no more attention than a dark complexion

would attract in Africa. Venus wouldn't get by as an extra girl and Cleopatra would be told she wasn't the type. As for Diana, Helen of Troy, Aphrodite and Salome—honestly, the Hollywoods are full of them!

So after being an "enter with others" for several lean and hungry months and being unable to live on the wages of cinema in the style I had determined to become accustomed to, I fled to Manhattan and landed my present portfolio. I find the telephone switchboard of a big New York hotel is a wonderful shop window to display such charms as eliminated the other entries in that Utah pulchritude tournament, and at the same time I'm sitting pretty to get a great line on the swear sex. I've heard it said that Fifty-ninth and Broadway is the busiest corner in the wide wide world, but I know different. Really, the corner of the St. Moe switchboard where I do my stuff would make Columbus Circle look as deserted as the top of Pike's Peak! I'm daily besieged by traveling and stationary salesmen, millionaires, clerks, bellboys, lounge lizards, bootleggers, lawyers, doctors, movie actors or what have you. "Age cannot wither or custom stale their infinite variety," as Shakespeare used to say. Luncheon and dinner invitations fly back and forth like sparrows, automobile rides, dances and theaters are hourly offerings, and the only day my board isn't piled high with flowers and confectionery is Sunday. I'm off Sunday.

Still, though I consider everything that happens to me is interesting, I keep these Johns at a distance as a measure of safety. I'm nobody's fool! The voice with the smile is theirs to command and it's all fun till they get too exorbitant with their requests; then I simply give them the last lesson first.

Alone in pitiless Manhattan, except for Hazel Killian—a former model who has gone either up or down to the stage—I don't crave one of the "broken hearts for every light on Broadway!" in the words of the late Tin Pan Alley success.

However, sitting at a telephone switchboard all day long dealing out numbers, listening to the silly arguments of the dizzy dumbbells with their perfectly maddening, "Why, operator, they *must* answer! They have a big switchboard—how *can* they be busy?" and fencing with these synthetic sheiks, is plenty nerve strain, don't think it isn't! Honestly, when I go off duty at night after eight riotous hours of this, I'm pretty low. So occasionally I shatter my rule and step out with some member of the predatory sex who by some gift, art, talent or through being in some unusual jam gets my attention for the minute. I keep my lily white hand on the emergency brake every second of these joy rides because—well, I'm not exactly an eyesore and boys will be boys. But no matter how excited they become I always manage to keep the situation well in hand and I've never yet had to call the gendarmes to put one of my escorts in line. The most abused term in the English language is "good fellow," but, really, it's still possible for a girl to be that among men and keep their respect and her own, even in New York!

A chorus man, a prize fighter, a millionaire, a playwright and a bellhop came to me in succession with their troubles and in each case I managed to help them out and incidentally liven up what might have been dull periods in my career—and theirs, too. Guy Tower, the wealthiest of my admirers, calls me "the Goddess from the Machine." Isn't that lovely, whatever it means? But until I tackled the case of Oliver Thurston, private detective, the only machine I had was a sewing machine. Now I have the cutest little sport model 1923 Puddle-Jumper, just through being a—but here's the lowdown on it.

To begin with, Oliver Thurston was a jig-saw puzzle to me from the first, and generally I can read the sturdy menfolk with one swift glance. Oliver just didn't click with me, and somehow he seemed all wrong for a first-class, blown in the flask, Simon-pure sleuth. This master mind didn't check up like the gum shoes of the books, plays and movies a-tall. He should have been middle-aged, slightly gray and stoop-shouldered, wearing horn-rimmed cheaters, packing a magnifying glass and a bulldog pipe, dressing in fearful taste and being slightly more bashful than a

rabbit. Instead of that, Thurston was tall and broad-shouldered, a regular fashion plate, handsome in a cold-eyed, man of the world manner and about as timid as a hungry lion in a sheep pen. He was passionately in love with himself and took it for granted that everybody else was, too.

Around the St. Moe they certainly gave him ample reason to think he was good, the awed hired help treating him with a reverence that burned me up. Honestly, he had 'em buffaloed, but it was different *here*! Before he'd been registered a week he fell right in line, filing his application to take me out, donating candy and flowers and stalling around the switchboard till the other girls were gnashing their teeth with envy. They said Thurston was just grand. I thought he was apple sauce, and from my actions he must have thought I was as cold as Nanook's nose. Without being able to put my finger on the reason, I just didn't like him. You've met people like that, haven't you?

One morning Jerry Murphy is moored at the end of my board trying to do himself some good as usual. Jerry is house detective at the St. Moe and about as useless as a dress suit would be in Sing Sing. Bigger than Central Park and much less interesting, this total loss has been attempting to promote himself with me since I came on the job here. But Jerry will never break up any homes. He's perfectly harmless—just a big fathead that you could go anywhere with and be safe, unless you consider soulful glances immoral. I'm kind to him, like I'd be to a St. Bernard, something he greatly resembles.

However, this particular morning the newspapers are full of a big diamond robbery that baffles the local police. Jerry points to the headlines in a paper which, with the copper's instinct, he's carrying rolled up like a club.

"They'll never nail them babies," he says scornfully. "This is the softest slab in the world for a crook. When I think 'at I'm slavin' away keepin' law and order in this cave for a hundred and twenty bucks the month and a swell mob can go down in Maiden Lane and glom ninety grand for a few minutes' work, it's all I can do to keep honest!"

"What gives you the crazy idea that you're honest," I says, "when you're taking thirty dollars a week from this hotel for hanging around my switchboard all day? What a swell detective you are! All you've shown me since I've been here is that you got adenoids!"

"Is it my fault 'at they don't pull off a big job in this joint and give me a chance to display my wares?" says Jerry indignantly. "I only wish I could lure a flock of high-class crooks in here and I'd show you some stuff, Cutey! But you can't get the boys within radio distance of the St. Moe since I been on the job. The word's went out through them secret underground channels 'at Jerry Murphy, the new Sherlock Holmes, is on watch at the St. Moe, and they duck this place like the outside was nothin' but smallpox signs! Why, say, Cutey, when I was on the po-lice force I was the gossip of New York. Remember 'at fatal trunk murder on Tenth Avenoo about twenty years ago?"

"No, you big goof," I says angrily. "Twenty years ago I was busy being born!"

"Well, even so, you must of heard the nurse talkin' about it," says Jerry, unruffled. "It was the most sensational murder since the Custer massacre and as full of mystery as boardin' house hash. I was only a young rookie copper, crammed with ambition and brighter than Jackie Coogan. For a month you couldn't pick up a newspaper without findin' my name in it!"

"For catching the murderer?" I asks breathlessly.

"For lettin' him go," says this clown coolly. "I nailed him as he run out of the house and the big stiff talked me out of it! Say, can I throw a party for you some night this week?"

"Nothing stirring, Jerry!"

I says firmly. "I've told you that before. I can't afford to be pegged bounding around with you while we're both working here. It would cause embarrassing talk in the hotel and—"

"'At's all right, Cutey," butts in Jerry soothingly. "Don't you worry your pretty head about them embarrassin' me. If any of these monkeys sees us playin' around I'll say it wasn't you at all I was with, but some other crazy admirer of



Abigail specialized in advice to the lovelorn, inviting the confidences of the other girls, and they took the brakes off their lively imaginations.



I felt faint and scared when Jerry told this Sir Galahad he was pinched, but I held my ground.

mine. By the way, I see this Mr. Thurston is givin' you quite a play."

I looked up in surprise because, honestly, that was the first time I had ever heard the hard-boiled Jeremiah call anybody "Mister" since I've been one of the show places of the St. Moe. Jerry would address President Harding as "Gammy," no fooling!

"Thurston would give *any* woman a play, Jerry," I says contemptuously. "He's just like you—always looking for the best of it. The next time you see him parked at the board here you have my permission to chase him!"

"I think you're out of order there, Cutey," says Jerry seriously. "Mr. Thurston is a high-class fellow, what I mean, and the rumor around here is 'at he's a perfect gent. And if 'at ain't sufficient, he's one of the greatest detectives which ever solved a bafflin' mystery from one look at the murdered man's sleeve garters! Nobody's hep to what he's here for, because like all guys which knows their business he's under cover, but you can gamble it's big stuff. Prob'ly got somethin' to do with 'at diamond robb'ry. All I got to say is if he's after them mugs they might as well confess. He's the bat's larnyx, I'll tell the cross-eyed world!"

"Oh, be yourself!" I says impatiently. "I never heard of Thurston till he blew in here, and I don't believe anybody else ever heard of him either, outside of his parents. What mysteries did *he* ever solve? He looks like a big false alarm to me and if he doesn't keep away from me I'm going to send you out for a cop and have him put under glass for a while!"

"Well," says Jerry thoughtfully, "he may look all wrong to you, but he looks like a million to me in 'at swell scenery he wears. I only wish I had the art of dressin' like 'at baby does! He sure wears a wicked tuxedo. Nevers the less, should he speak out of turn with you, Cutey, I'll smack him down, and 'at goes for Jack Dempsey!"

At this critical minute who should come along but the very person we're talking about. Not Jack Dempsey, but Oliver Thurston. He curls his lip contemptuously when he sees Jerry, but our charming house sleuth greets the private detective like a dog greets its master. Really, I thought for a minute Jerry was going to tip his derby to this big fathead, and if he had I would have crowned him with my inkwell!

Jerry didn't linger long now that the great Thurston was on hand, but found himself needed in a place called Elsewhere. The second he waddled away Thurston bends over the board.

"If that big animal is annoying you, Gladys," he says, throwing his chest out a foot, "I'll be pleased to take him outside and give him a thrashing he'll never forget!"

Sweet spirits of niter, both of these huskies ready to leap at each other's throats at a word from me! Don't you love that? I felt like the heroine in a movie—a very dull movie.

"You needn't commit suicide on *my* account," I says coldly.

"Jerry Murphy may have plenty to learn about this and that, but he's nobody's fool in a rough and tumble. I've seen him go and I'd advise you not to choose him!"

Then I reached over and threw my fur about my shapely shoulders. I was very properly dressed, but georgette is rather sheer and with Thurston's eyes—beady even when he smiled—boring through it I honestly felt positively naked! I loathe men who look at you like that, don't you?

"I don't think I should have much trouble with Murphy, in spite of his prowess," sneers Thurston in an affected drawl. "Eh—I was a champion amateur boxer at one time, you know."

"Fawncy that!" I drawled back. Then I looked him up and down with a cold smile and added, "You hate yourself, don't you?"

Thurston frowns, and honestly his eyes become slits.

"Why are you so antagonistic to me?" he asks, like he can't understand how anyone can't resist him. "Don't you like me?"

"Do you expect me to leap up and kiss you?" I says evasively.

"Stranger things could happen," he remarks, with what I bet he thought was a killing smile.

"But not to *me*!" I snapped. "I don't like to slam the door in your face, but really I must ask you to shove off. It's against the rules for us girls to kid with the customers, and if you don't go away you'll get a ticket for violating the parking ordinance here."

"Will you dine with me tonight?" he asks eagerly.

"Mr. Thurston," I says, "I might as well tell you once and for all that I wouldn't go out with you if it was a felony not to. As who's this says, 'You may be all the world to your mother, but you're an awful bust to *me*!'"

"Is that so?" softly says Thurston, but he's fit to be tied—I can see it. "Is that so? Well, I'll make you a little wager that I'll take you out within a month!"

"Blaah!" I says politely. "You sound like a scenario. Step into number four booth, please!"

"Why?" he asks, a bit puzzled.

"I've got your number!" I says sweetly, and turned my back to him.

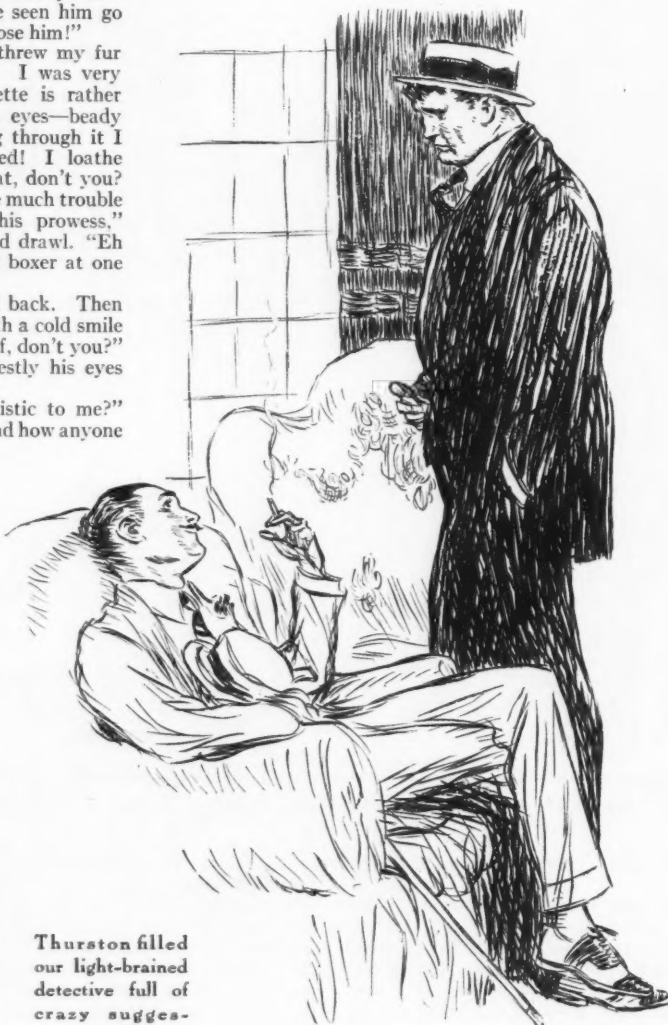
That was the beginning of one of the most exciting adventures I've had in an exceedingly exciting life!

Amongst the inmates of the St. Moe was Abigail Monkton, a charming tot of some fifty hard winters, enjoying the delights of her second childhood. Abigail was richer than a cup custard and as foolish as you'll find 'em outside of a sanitarium. Among the things Miss Monkton had failed to do in the mad rush and bustle of living was get married, and she was now making a frantic attempt to rectify that annoying error. Abigail was staging a stand against the ravages of time that proved she was as game as she was silly. Her weapons in a futile daily battle against the advancing years were rouge, powder, mascara, belladonna, lip sticks, expensive wigs, extreme clothes, much display of jewelry, ceaseless massages and manicures, baths of every known variety in the deadfalls called beauty parlors, and instruction in the latest dance steps from all the best known masters but St. Vitus.

Well, this gold-plated old maid was a scream to my little playmates of the telephone switchboard, but honestly Abigail was too tragic to me to be just a giggle. I pitied her, in spite of the fact that her continual "girlie" and "dearie" got on my

nerves plenty. Likewise I was a bit steamed up about her for making my popular sex ridiculous by going boy-crazy at fifty. She specialized in advice to the lovelorn, inviting the confidences of the other girls at the board and listening as breathlessly as a chambermaid at a keyhole to their alleged adventures and difficulties with their Johns. Realizing that Abby got quite a kick out of this stuff, these impish young ladies took the brakes off their lively imaginations, enjoying her eager attention just as much as she enjoyed their cuckoo stories—which was ample! Old enough to be their grandmother, Abby always addressed the bunch as "we girls," and when I bawled 'em out for kidding Old Mother Goose with their fairy tales they told me to tend to my own activities, because it was all fun and Abigail was a find that they didn't intend to lose now that they had her all built up. They could always put the bee on her for pin money between pay days, and an especially good love story in which one of 'em played the wronged victim would bring a hat or a gown from the champion listener of the world. Terrible, weren't they?

Being twice as flirtatious as Potiphar's wife,



Thurston filled our light-brained detective full of crazy suggestions for catching the burglar.

Abigail knew where the sterner sex gathered, and honestly she lingered around the switchboard like the odor of boiled cabbage in a Sixth Avenue kitchenette. She vamped one and all, featuring coy glances and kittenish snickers, to the great entertainment of the males. But as I feared, it was Oliver Thurston that goaled her. One glance at the handsome Nick Carter and Abby was overboard!

With a cynical grin I watched her set sail for him, and while her work was fearfully crude and amateurish, I must say she got results. Edging up beside Mr. Detective one day when he was making a stall of looking up a name in the phone book so he could pester poor little me, Abigail's first imitation was to cough and drop her handkerchief. That's all been done away with in the new rule books. Following a life-long and expensive habit, Thurston turned his comely head at the feminine cough, immediately seeing the bit of silk on the floor and the you chase me and I'll chase you expression on Abigail's face. His own features were a three second movie, really! A harsh laugh stopped at his tonsils and his cold, rather cruel eyes narrowed. Then off comes his chapeau, as with a drawing room bow and a dazzling smile he recovers the handkerchief and returns it to the delighted Abigail Monkton.

Thus began Abigail's mock romance, caused by Cupid changing from an angel-eyed chubby little darling to a hard-faced, devilish little brat!

After that day Thurston seemed as unable to keep away from Abby as a sardine is unable to keep away from a can. They were always meeting in the lobby and the wires between their rooms were busier than Busy himself. The other girls were convulsed by the stuff they eavesdropped, but honestly I wouldn't be bothered listening in to any sweet nothings passed between a Romeo of thirty and a Juliet of fifty, if you know what I mean. However, I did kid Thurston once about his affair of the heart, as they say in Guatemala, and his reaction surprised me. Instead of laughing it off, he told me very seriously that Abigail was delightful and dwelt on her charms to such an extent that I soon stopped smiling and became very, very thoughtful. When I saw them having tea together on the roof garden later, with Abigail gazing into Thurston's eyes as if they were a couple of suppressed novels, I began to speculate in earnest on just what the big boy's racket was.

The mysterious private detective's attentions to the simpering foolish virgin didn't seem to slow up his ambitions in my direction a particle, though whenever dear old Abby was in the immediate vicinity Thurston throttled down and became merely polite to me. This amused me so highly that simply because I didn't like his work I made matters harder for Oliver Thurston by flirting outrageously with him the minute Abby came near the switchboard and refusing even to talk to him when she was nowhere to be seen.

Then one bright morning Abigail hurls the fashionable St. Moe into a turmoil by excitedly dashing into the manager's office and loudly squawking that her \$100,000 pearl necklace has been abducted from her boudoir. Honestly, she made more noise than a dress rehearsal of a lynching about losing this gewgaw, and in spite of the frantic efforts of the hotel management to keep the thing quiet, why, the thrilling news seeped out and the panic was on. Anyone who can keep a matter like that a dark secret in a large New York hotel can also make a stone bleed to death!

Well, for the next few days you couldn't turn around in our well known inn without bumping into a plain-clothes man, a reporter or a photographer. This got Mr. Williams, the manager, red-headed, but it tickled Abigail silly. Honestly, she was having the time of her life, giving out interviews and posing for newspaper pictures all day long. When public interest in the robbery seemed to be dying down, Abby hauled off and offered a reward of \$10,000 for the return of her necklace and that started something!

For one thing, it threw a pair of people right into the spotlight and put it up to them to make good or turn in their shields as detectives and forever hold their peace. The two were Jerry Murphy, our noble house gum shoe, and Oliver Thurston, the private pussyfooter. Jeremiah promptly swelled all up like a sprained ankle and told the world fair that the ten thousand



While Abigail's work was fearfully amateurish, I must say she got results with the handsome Nick Carter.

was the same as in the bank to his account, as he had every intention of restoring the pearls and jailing the thief over the week-end. Nobody gave poor Jerry a tumble, beyond telling him he was a comic opera detective and to keep his nose out of the case as he'd only make a bad matter worse. It was Mr. Oliver Thurston who got the undivided attention of one and all. Here was the big chance for him to prove that he meant something, and the habitués of the St. Moe, positive he was bonded goods, sat back expectantly to watch him do his stuff.

But to everybody's astonishment, Thurston seemed only mildly concerned about Abigail's robbery and made little or no comment on it, intimating that million dollar thefts and unusual murder mysteries were more in his line. So lordly was his manner that this explanation evidently satisfied and impressed the rest of 'em, but it was the turkey's fountain pen to me! The first chance I got I asked this so called clue collector how come he wasn't functioning in the great \$100,000 pearl necklace mystery. Thurston smiled carelessly and flicked the ash off his cigarette with a carefully manicured nail.

"In the first place, my dear girl," he says, pushing back a yawn, "nyther Miss Monkton nor the hotel management has retained me in the matter, and in the second place"—another flick of his cigarette ash—"eh—in the second place, I am not particularly interested in petty larceny!"

"Tomato sauce!" I says sarcastically. "I suppose you could ponder all night and yet not find use for that ten thousand dollars' reward, eyether?"

(Continued on page 124)

The Hope of Happiness

Illustrations by
Pruett Carter

The Story So Far:

THE beloved mother of young Bruce Storrs on her deathbed tells him of her one lapse in a faithful married life; he is not the son of her husband, but of a man named Franklin Mills. She begs Bruce to live near this man, to help him if it is ever necessary.

When Bruce has readjusted his views after this shock, he goes to the Mid-west city where Mills lives, and through a college friend, Bud Henderson, secures a position with an architect, Freeman. Franklin Mills he discovers to be rich, aristocratic, self-satisfied. From the first Bruce finds himself almost unwillingly helping the entire Mills family.

At heart very lonely, Mills rules his little circle with an iron hand gloved in velvet, and does not see the unhappiness he creates. His son Shepherd, for instance—he tramples on the boy's idealistic efforts to help his battery plant employees, and transfers him willy-nilly to a position as vice-president of a new trust company. It is Bruce who calms Shep's despair over his father's callousness. As for Leila, Mills's daughter—her impetuous nature is inclined to find solace from her father's interference in little sprees of her own; a habit which Bruce, who rescues her from one or two embarrassing situations, is able to make her give up. The other member of Mills's family is Constance, Shep's wife, a born flirt who is apparently just now in love with one George Whitford.

Between Bruce and his father there develops a more or less subconscious duel. The situation is rendered acute by the fact that Bruce gradually falls in love with Leila's artistically gifted friend, Millicent Harden, only to find that Mills, coolly, calculatingly, is determined to marry her.

Leila is in love, in her way, with Freddy Thomas, a divorced man of whom her father strongly disapproves. One day Franklin overhears her speaking in very endearing terms to Thomas over the telephone. He loses his temper and berates her bitterly. Leila remains cool, but at heart she is deeply hurt. She and her father are leaving shortly for Bermuda.

Bruce at this time is engrossed in designing a war memorial for a contest being held by his native town, Laconia, Ohio. One evening he calls on Constance. Mills comes in during the evening, deeply worried, and says that Leila cannot be found.

Guided by some instinct, Bruce goes alone to Leila's boathouse. There he finds her lying unconscious beside an empty whisky bottle. He picks her up and carries her out tenderly. Mills has followed; in his eyes are pain, horror and submission. Without a word, Bruce places Leila in her father's arms.



CHAPTER XII

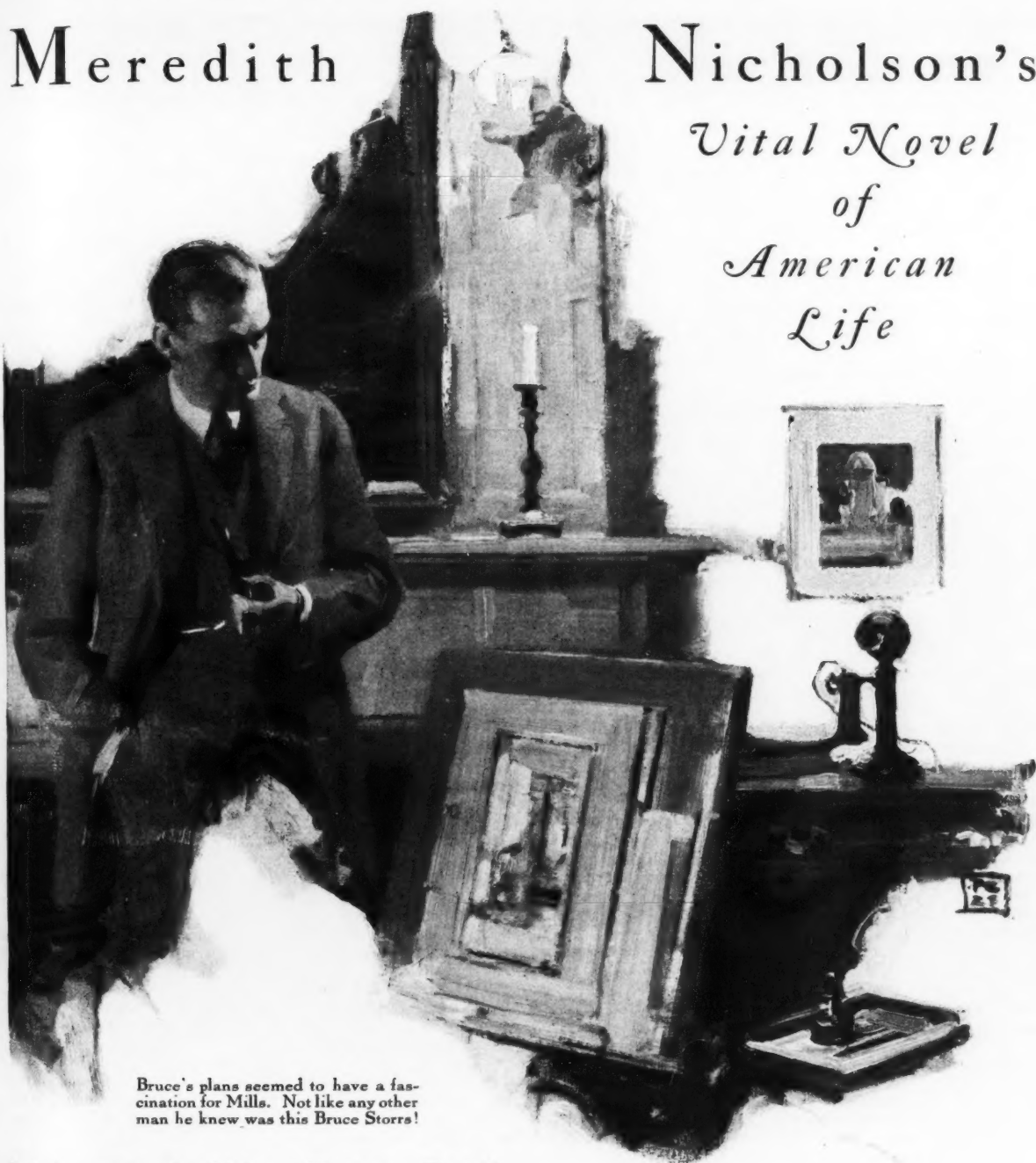
THE day following his discovery of Leila Mills in the boathouse, Bruce remained in his apartment. He could not bring himself to touch elbows with a world which the night had left confused and blurred, a place where mankind stumbled and erred and suffered, and happiness was only a mockery. He was not a little awed by the instinct that had led him to the river—the unlikely of places in which to seek the runaway girl. That poor little drugged body lying there in the cold room, her deep sigh and the touch of her hand on his face as he took her up, and more poignantly the look in Franklin Mills's face when they met at the door, remained with him, and he knew that these were things he could never forget. His varying sensations from the moment his eyes first fell upon the girl until the car bore her away were now a part of his life.

There was more of superstition and mysticism in his blood than he had believed. Lounging about his rooms, staring down at the bleak street as it whitened in a brisk snowfall, his thoughts ranged the wide seas of doubt and faith. Life was only a corridor between two doors of mystery. Petty and contemptible seemed the old familiar teachings about God. Men were not rejecting

Meredith

Nicholson's

*Vital Novel
of
American
Life*



Bruce's plans seemed to have a fascination for Mills. Not like any other man he knew was this Bruce Storrs!

God; they were merely misled as to His nature. The spirit of man was only an infinitesimal particle of the spirit that was God. No other person he had ever talked with had offered so reasonable a solution of the problem as Millicent.

Again he went over their talk on the golf course. Millicent had the clue—the clue to a reality no less tangible and plausible because it was born of unreality. And here was the beginning of wisdom: to abandon the attempt to explain all things when so manifestly life would become intolerable if the walls of mystery through which man moves were battered down. As near as he was able to express it, the soul required room—all infinity, indeed, as the playground for its proper exercise. The freer a man's spirit the greater its capacity for loving and serving its neighbor souls. Somewhere in the illimitable horizons of which Millicent dreamed it was imaginable that Something august and supreme dominated the universe—Something only belittled by every attempt to find a name for it.

Strange reflections for a healthy young mind in a stalwart, vigorous young body! Bruce hardly knew himself today. The scent of Leila's hair as he bore her out of the boathouse had stirred a tenderness in his heart that was strange to him. He hoped Franklin Mills had dealt leniently with Leila. He had

no idea what the man would do or say after finding his daughter in such a plight. He considered telephoning Mills's house to ask about her, but dismissed the thought. His duty was discharged the moment he gave her into her father's keeping; in all the circumstances an inquiry would be an impertinence.

Poor Leila! Poor, foolish, generous, kind little kid! Too bad that she couldn't behave herself. Her father was much too conspicuous for her little excursions among the shoals of folly to pass unremarked. Bruce found himself excusing and defending her latest escapade. She had taken refuge in the oblivion of alcohol as an escape from her troubles . . . Something wrong somewhere. Shep and Leila both groping in the dark for the door of happiness and getting no help from their father in their search—a deplorable situation. Not altogether Franklin Mills's fault; perhaps no one's fault; just the way things happen, but no less tragic for all that.

Bruce called the janitor to bring in his dinner, happy to be alone, looking forward to a long evening in which to brood over

The Hope of Happiness

his plans for the memorial. He was glad that he had not run away from Franklin Mills. It was much better to have remained in the town, and more comfortable to have met Mills and the members of his family than to have lived in the same community speculating about them endlessly without ever knowing them. He knew them now all too well! Even Franklin Mills was emerging from the mists; Bruce began to think he knew what manner of man Mills was. Shepherd had opened his own soul to him; and Leila—Bruce made allowances for Leila and saw her merits with full appreciation.

One thing was certain: he did not envy Franklin Mills or his children their lot; he coveted nothing they possessed. He thanked his stars that he had had the wit to reject Mills's offer to help him into a business position of promise; to be under an obligation of any sort to Franklin Mills would be intolerable. He was glad that he had asserted his independence to Mills and defined sharply and ineffaceably the line between them.

He was at his drawing table when, a little after eight, the annunciator roused him.

"Mr. Storrs? This is Mr. Mills speaking—may I trouble you for a moment?"

"Yes; certainly. Come right up, Mr. Mills."

There was no way out of it. He could not deny himself to Franklin Mills. Bruce hurriedly put on his coat, cleared up the litter on his table, straightened the cushions on the divan and went into the hall to receive his guest. He saw Mills's head and shoulders below; Mills was mounting slowly, leaning heavily upon the stair rail. At the second landing—Bruce's rooms were on the third floor—Mills paused and drew himself erect with a deep breath.

Bruce withdrew to the door to avoid embarrassing his caller in his further ascent.

"It's a comfort not to have all the modern conveniences," Mills remarked graciously when Bruce apologized for the stairs. "Thank you, no; I'll not take off my coat. You're nicely situated here—I got your number from Carroll. That's part of Arthur's job—to be able to answer my questions."

He sat down, retaining his hat and stick. His climb up the three flights had evidently wearied him and he twisted the head of his cane nervously as he waited for his heart to resume its normal beat. There was a tired look in his eyes and his face lacked its usual healthy color. If Mills had come to speak of Leila, Bruce resolved to make the interview as easy for him as possible. In a few minutes he was quite himself again, and to Bruce's surprise he rose and stood, with something of the ceremonial air of one about to deliver a message whose nature demanded formality. Bruce unconsciously imitated his deferential manner.

"Mr. Storrs, I came to thank you for the great service you rendered me last night. I was in very great distress. You can understand my anxious concern; so I needn't touch upon that. Words are inadequate to express my gratitude. But I can at least let you know that I appreciate what you did for me—for me and my daughter."

He ended with the slightest inclination of the head. Again, as once before, Bruce was struck by the dignity Mills threw into the words "my daughter." He uttered them more with the accent of a king referring to a princess of his house than as a father speaking of a child. The words were cold; it was not Franklin Mills's heart that spoke but the pride that dominated his heart.

"Thank you, Mr. Mills," said Bruce, taking the hand Mills extended. "I hope Miss Mills is quite well."

"Quite, thank you." With an abrupt change of manner Mills glanced about the room. "You bring work home? That speaks for zeal in your profession." He added with a smile, "Aren't the days long enough?"

"Oh, this is a little private affair of my own," Bruce replied, noting that Mills's gaze had returned to the drawings he had set against the wall.

It was understood between him and Freeman that his participation in the Laconia competition was to be kept secret; but he felt moved to explain to Mills the nature of the drawings. The man had suffered in the past twenty-four hours—was still suffering. It would be ungenerous to let him go without making some attempt to divert his thoughts.

"This may interest you, Mr. Mills. I mean the general proposition—not my little sketches. Only—it must be confidential."

"Yes; certainly"—Mills smiled a grave assent. "Perhaps you'd rather not tell me—I'm afraid my curiosity got the better of my manners."

"Oh, not that, sir! Mr. and Mrs. Freeman know, of course; but I don't want to have to explain my failure in case I lose! I'm glad to tell you about it; you may have some suggestions."

Mills listened with unmistakable interest as Bruce explained the requirements of the Laconia memorial and illustrated with the drawings what he proposed to offer.

"Laconia?" Mills repeated the name quickly. "How very interesting."

"You may recall the site," Bruce went on, displaying a photograph of the hilltop.

"I remember the place very well; there couldn't be a finer site. I suppose the town owns the whole hill? That's a fine idea—to adjust the building to that bit of forest; the possibilities are enormous. There should be a fitting approach—terraces, perhaps a fountain directly in front of the entrance—"

"That hadn't occurred to me. It would be fine!"

Mills, his interest growing, slipped out of his overcoat and sat down in the chair beside the drawing board.

"Those colonnades extending at both sides give something of the effect of wings—buoyancy is what I mean," Mills remarked. "I like the classical severity of the thing. Beauty can be got with a few lines—but they must be the right ones. Nature's a sound teacher there . . ."

Bruce forgot that there was any tie between them; Laconia was only a place where a soldier's memorial was to be constructed. Mills's attitude toward the project was marked by the restraint, the diffidence of a man of breeding wary of offending but eager to help. Bruce had seen at once the pictorial value of the fountain. He left Mills at the drawing table and paced the floor pondering.

The look of weariness left Mills's face. He was watching with frankly admiring eyes the tall figure, the broad shoulders, the finely molded head, the absorbed, perplexed look in the handsome face. Not like Shep; not like any other young man he knew was this Bruce Storrs! Storrs's resemblance to Franklin Mills III struck him anew, but tonight he did not resent it; something told him that he would never again resent it.

Remembering that he had a guest, Bruce glanced at Mills and caught the look in his face. For a moment both were embarrassed. "Do pardon me!" Bruce exclaimed quickly. "I was just trying to see my way through a thing or two. I'm afraid I'm boring you."

Mills murmured a denial and took a cigarette from the box Bruce extended. "How much money is there to spend on this? I was just thinking that that's an important point."

"One hundred thousand. Mr. Freeman warns me that it's hardly enough for what I propose."

He drew from a drawer the terms of the competition and the specifications, and smoked in silence while Mills looked them over.

"It's all clear enough. It's a joint affair—the county does half and the rest is a popular subscription?"

"Yes. The local committee are fine people; too bad they haven't enough to do the thing just right!" Bruce replied. "Of course I mean the way I'd like to do it—with your idea of the fountain that I'd rejoice to steal!"

"That's a joke—that I could offer any suggestion of real value! I'm rather partial to fountains. I've wanted to have one in front of the house at Deer Trail; but Leila"—a wistful look came into his face—"Leila says it wouldn't be harmonious with stock breeding."

Bruce was finding his caller a very different Franklin Mills from the man he had talked with in the Jefferson Avenue house, and not at all the man, in his rôle of country squire, whose hospitality he had enjoyed at Deer Trail. Mills was enjoying himself; there was no question of this. He lighted a cigar.

"You will not be known as a competitor; your plans will go in anonymously?" he inquired.

"Yes; that's stipulated," Bruce replied.

Returning to the plans—they seemed to have a fascination for Mills—one of his questions prompted Bruce to seize a pencil and try another form of entrance. Mills stood by, watching the free swift movement of the strong young hand.

"I'm not so sure that's better than your first idea. I've always heard that a first inspiration is likely to be the best—providing always that it is an inspiration! I'd give a lot if I could do what you've just done with that pencil. I suppose it's a knack; you're born with it. You probably began young; such talent shows itself early."

"I can't remember a time when I didn't like to fool with a pencil. My mother gave me my first lessons. She had a very pretty talent—sketched well and did water colors—very nice ones, too. That's one of hers over there—a corner of our garden in the old home at Laconia."



No make-believe could have simulated the ardor of Whitford's wooing or the tenderness of Constance's replies.

Mills walked slowly across the room to look at the framed water color which hung over Bruce's writing table.

"Yes; I can see that it's good work. I remember that garden—I seem to remember this same line of hollyhocks."

"Oh, she had that every year. Mother's flowers were famous in Laconia."

"And that sun-dial—I seem to remember, that too."

"Mother liked that sort of thing. We used to sit out there in the summer. She made a little festival of the coming of spring—welcoming the first robins. I think all the birds in creation

knew her as a friend. We had jolly good times there—mother and I!"

"I'm sure you did," said Mills gravely.

As he stepped away from the table his eyes fell upon the photograph of a young woman in a silver frame. He bent down for a closer inspection.

"Your mother; yes, I thought so. Somewhat older than when I knew her, but the look of youth is still there."

"Yes. I was three or four when that was taken. I prefer it to any other picture of her I have. She refused to be



Bruce stared dully at the scattered fragments. Then he turned toward Millicent with the hunger of love

photographed in her later years—said she didn't want me to think of her as old. And she never was that—could never have been."

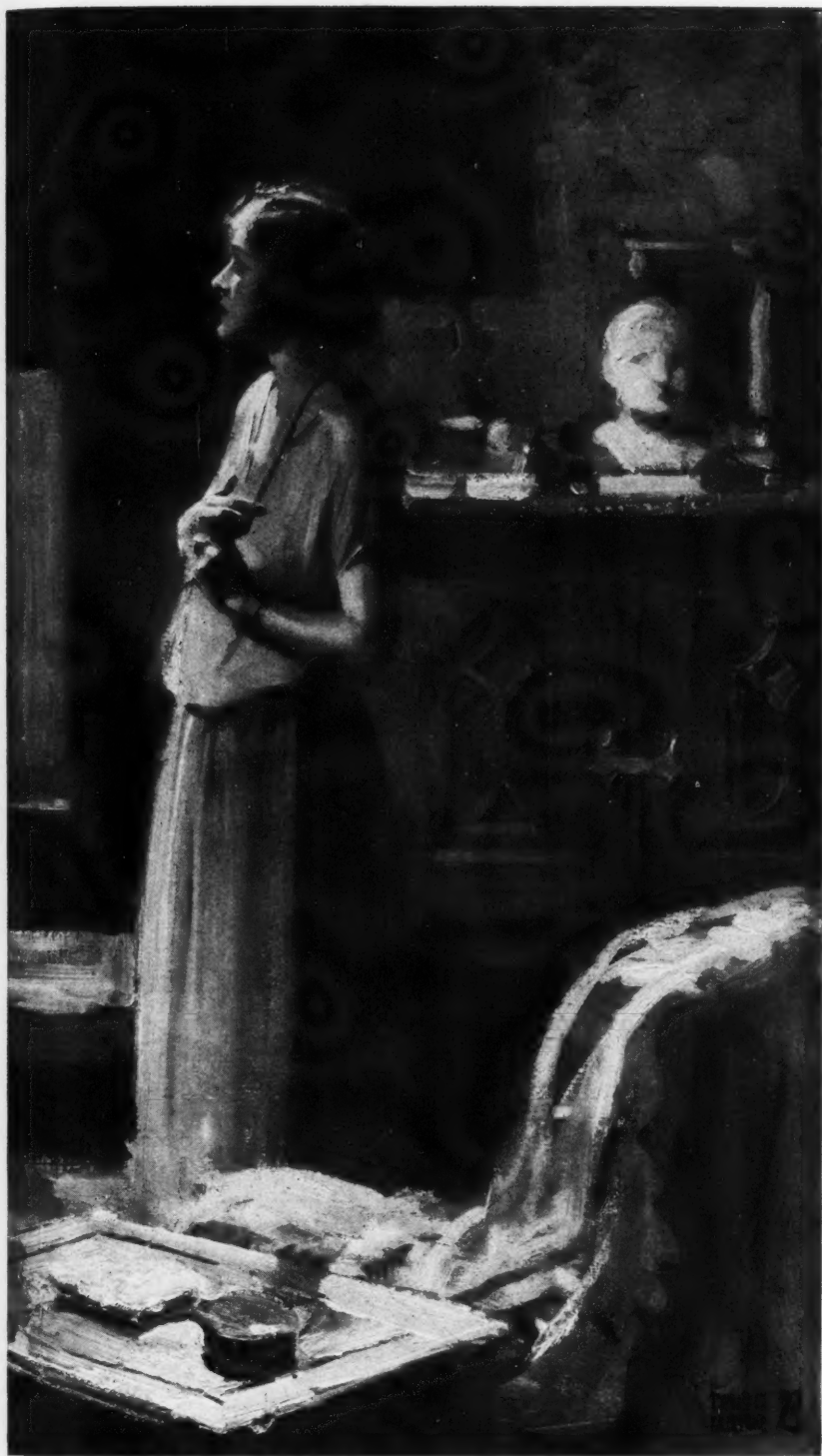
"I can well believe it," said Mills softly. "Time deals gently with spirits like hers."

"No one was ever like her," said Bruce with feeling. "She made the world a kinder and finer place by living in it."

"And you're living up to the ideal she set for you! You think of her, I'm sure, in all you do—in all you mean to be."

"Yes; it helps—it helps a lot to feel that somewhere she knows and cares."

Mills remembered! This for an awed moment was the dominant thought in Bruce's mind. Not for nothing had Marian Storrs yielded herself to Mills in the long ago. Not the gross but what was fine in him had been kindled in those months that he had spent in Laconia and known that garden with its brick wall and the flowers that Marian Storrs had tended. She used to sing—little scraps of old songs there in the lingering summer twilight, holding Bruce close against her heart. There was at least this tie between him and Franklin Mills: both had known her beauty, her sweetness, her joy in life and love. It was in Mills's favor that he had not forgotten. It was for her



in his eyes. "I—I—I'm sorry—I didn't mean to do that!" he stammered.

that he was now manifesting so kind an interest in the plans for the memorial. Death had not destroyed her; she was there with them, radiant, visitant, happy that they were together.

Mills picked up a book, scanned the title page unseeing and put it down.

"I've just about killed an evening for you," he said with a smile, and put out his hand.

"You've been a big help!" replied Bruce warmly. "It's been fine to have you here. I'll see Mr. Freeman tomorrow and go over the thing again. He may be able to squeeze the fountain out of the appropriation! May I tell him it's your idea?"

"No; no indeed!" Mills exclaimed quickly. "Just let my meddlesomeness be a little joke between you and me. I shall be leaving town shortly and may not see you again for several months. So good by and good luck!"

Bruce walked downstairs with him. At the entrance they again shook hands, as if the good will on both sides demanded this further expression of amity.

A brief item in the "Personal and Society" column of the afternoon newspaper apprised Bruce a few days later of the departure of Mr. Franklin Mills and Miss Leila Mills for the Mediterranean, they having abandoned their proposed excursion to Bermuda for the longer voyage. Bruce wondered a little at the change of plans, suspecting that it might in some degree be a disciplinary measure for Leila's benefit, a scheme for keeping her longer under her father's immediate eye. He experienced a curious new loneliness at the thought of their absence and then was impatient to find himself giving them a second thought. A month earlier he would have been relieved by the knowledge that Mills was gone and that the wide seas rolled between them. An amazing thing, this! To say they were nothing to him did not help now as in those first months after he had established himself in Mills's town. They meant a good deal to him and perhaps also he meant something to them.

As he put down the newspaper a note was brought to him at his apartment by Mills's chauffeur. It read:

Dear Bruce: You said I might; I can't just Mr. Storrs you! Trunks at the station and dada is waiting for me at the front door. I want this note to reach you after I'm on the train—I couldn't bear the idea of writing you a note you'd read while I'm still in town. Please consider that I'm just throwing you a kiss from the tail end of the observation car. I could never, never have had the courage to say my thanks to you, for if I tried I'd cry horribly and make a general mess of it. But I want you to know I do appreciate it—what you did—in saving my life and every little thing.

I really didn't know till yesterday, when I wormed it out of dada, just how it happened. I'm simply crushed! and I promise you I'll never do such a thing again. But I was troubled—awfully troubled and mad! and after I'd taken just a little tiny nip I just had to go away off by myself to the loneliest place I could think of and drown my sorrow, the river being frozen so I couldn't drown anything else. Well, I'd probably have died all right enough in the frightful cold if you hadn't found me.

I'm going to be good now, so you won't (Continued on page 142)

Synthetic Adventure



ACCORDING to his usual custom, Mr. Stalk walked to the station. A brisk walk cleared his mind, he always said, for he had a way of sitting up very late, absorbed in some romantic novel or other which lured him on from chapter to chapter until long after midnight.

And so he strode along the winding suburban streets, inhaling deep breaths of the fresh, clean morning air. Great banks of bridal-wreath, like snow-drifts, flanked the walks; birds chirped cheerfully in the trees. And as usual, he was struck by the potential romance or mystery of each familiar bit of landscape. The square stone church tower, veiled in ivy, might easily be the turret of an old English castle, and it required no great imagination to picture supernatural inhabitants in that deserted old house half hidden among the scraggly cedars.

He arrived at the station a few minutes early and joined the other "regulars" who stood awaiting the eight ten. This morning gathering, witnessed for years, never failed to resemble, to Mr. Stalk, a group of crusaders advancing to attack the grim problems twenty-five miles ahead in the great city.

One of the last to arrive was Mr. Wadsworth, the richest man in the little suburban community. His limousine drew noiselessly up to the platform and he descended, portly and impressive. His arrival was always an event. Deferential bows met him on all sides. Conversation was for the moment suspended, although Mr. Wadsworth stood some little distance apart, glancing over his paper.

Mr. Stalk observed him speculatively, thinking what a cataclysm in the market his death would some day cause, when suddenly he was aware that two strangers had appeared. They were roughly clad, swarthy of complexion and furtive in their actions. They spoke in a language he did not recognize. And then for the first time Mr. Stalk noticed a closed car, a cheap make, at the edge of the platform near Mr. Wadsworth.

This combination of circumstances struck Mr. Stalk. By intuition, particularly acute this morning, he sensed an impending disaster. It was not by chance that the two strangers were there talking in low tones, or that near-by a closed car stood with motor running. The abduction and disappearance of Lycurgus Wadsworth would profoundly shake the financial world. Fortunes would totter, and millions would be offered in ransom. Mr. Stalk gripped his cane and drew nearer. His plan of action was made. Instead of boarding the now approaching train, as was obviously expected of him, he would step back at the crucial moment. When the two strangers, now quite near the magnate, seized him and bore him struggling to the car, he would leap forward, striking them with his stick, and as they turned with drawn pistols to shoot him down Mr. Wadsworth could escape. Bang! Men would rush forward and seize the conspirators. The story would resound through the world. "Saved by Lemuel Stalk"—"A modest hero." Deathless glory and renown!

At this moment the eight ten, some minutes late, drew in to the station, Mr. Wadsworth got on his customary car, and the two strangers boarded the smoker. The trip into town was without further incident.

Mr. Stalk, still somewhat shaken by his narrow escape from what might have been a tragedy, went through the crowded streets toward his office. With some misgivings he observed that it was late. Very likely there would be a scene, for between him and his immediate superior there was, office gossip had it, rivalry for the manager's job. Such a chance as this to discredit him, Mr. Stalk felt sure, would never be let slip.

As he hurried along he worked himself up to a pitch of fury. He grasped his stick and frowned darkly. He was a fearsome figure. Very well! Let the scrap begin. Now was as good a time as any for a showdown. At the very first word of criticism he would turn upon the creature.

"Look here! this has got to stop. Another word and I'll hurl you out of the window! I'll not be browbeaten by a creature like you, you insufferable tyrant!"

They would come to blows. A normally peaceful office would become a pandemonium of shrieking stenographers. Tables would be overturned. Hurry calls for the police would bring a band of big blue-coated huskies to tear the embattled men apart. He, Stalk, would nonchalantly dust off his coat, light his pipe with an easy gesture and gaze pityingly at the bruised and battered figure of his enemy.

With the blood of generations of fighting ancestors boiling in his veins, and the heart of a crusader pounding in his breast, Mr. Stalk entered the office.

His superior greeted him with a pleasant smile.

"I was driving out past your place last night, Stalk, and me and my missus almost dropped in on you."

The smooth current of affairs moved along with its customary precision and presently occupied Mr. Stalk.

Noontime came. The mechanism of the office slowed down and one by one the force departed for luncheon.

It was Mr. Stalk's habit, begotten of years of repetition, to visit a quiet little place only a few doors away on a side street.

Here hurried men dropped in, ate quickly, talked shop a few minutes and then hurried out.

Today he resolved to fare somewhat farther afield, to a queer little restaurant near the water-front. It contained a few pictures of ships, one or two old ships' lanterns, and usually a rather strange looking lot of foreigners, very quiet and repressed. Thither Mr. Stalk repaired. Only a few of the tables in the



Words and Pictures by JOHN T. McCUTCHEON



dusky interior were occupied. As he seated himself, he noticed a young woman, well under thirty, seated alone at an adjoining table. Upon her face was a look of inexpressible sadness. She glanced up and he seemed to see a sudden change come over her. For a moment her eyes rested upon him and as he gave his order he was conscious that she was closely regarding him.

The waiter slowly disappeared, and presently Mr. Stalk was aware that excepting for two dark-browed men, only he and the woman remained. Without seeming to stare, he succeeded in getting one or two surreptitious glances by which he was able to form an appraisal.

She was unquestionably beautiful in a rather pathetic way. She might have been Russian. Her hair was black and simply dressed, and her eyes had a faintly Oriental slant as though somewhere far back there might have been a strain of Tartar blood.

It was the setting for a romance. Obviously she was in trouble and obviously he could be of service to her. But how? In what form would she make her appeal? Perhaps:

"Oh, sir, if you please, will you let me speak with you? I noticed you when you came in, and I know you are a kind man. I am in great distress."

By now the sympathetic Mr. Stalk would be sitting at her table. From without the murmur of the great city would penetrate only as a dull sustained roar, detached and far away from this sequestered bywater of city life.

"Please tell me. How can I be of service? You can trust me absolutely."

A shadow passed over the young woman's face. After a slight hesitation she spoke again, and her voice, though tense and lowered, was strangely sweet.

"I am from Russia. I shall not tell you who my parents were—you would not believe me. We fled to the Crimea when the great terror began. Now they are dead. I alone of our ancient house remain alive—a friendly guard saved me. But oh, the tragedy that has burned into my soul! I feel I shall never smile again." She paused and a tear trickled down her pale cheek.

"Oh, sir, if you too had lived in a great palace in Petrograd during the court season and in a beautiful villa in Yalta when our noble families went south each year, you would understand and pity."

"I do pity, madam, with my whole soul. Command me, my life is at your service." As he watched her he was struck by her likeness to someone whose picture he had often admired in the Sunday supplement—the Grand Duchess Tatiana.



"There is nothing more in life for me," she went on. "But before I am driven by despair to the river, there is one duty I must perform. Do you see this ring?" Glancing cautiously about, she held out one upon which was a crown in beautiful enamel surmounted by a single letter which resembled an H. "It was my father's. It has been in the family a very long time. But to perform this last duty I must have help."

Mr. Stalk's heart was beating furiously, and his thoughts were in a turmoil. It must be she! And she had selected him—Lemuel Stalk—to trust. But it meant the frightful dangers of intrigue. Royal houses, revolutions, rings! He was held by the spell of her clear eyes as she continued: "Of course I could not expect you to risk so much for nothing. Dare I hope for your unswerving loyalty when all I have to give you in return is—myself?"

Mr. Stalk, deep in this enthralling current of thought, had not noticed that the young woman at the next table had quietly departed. With a sigh he paid his check and returned to the office quite exhausted by this appealing figment of his imagination, and very soberly went about his afternoon's work.

At three his wife telephoned, asking him to be sure and bring out a box of fruit. He left the office at the customary time and bought the fruit. To save time he took a short cut to the station which led him through a crowded and unsavory street. A man jostled him and he felt at once for his watch. It was safe. A woman leered significantly at him. Anything might happen to a person in this place! He could see the headlines "Murder Mystery in Slums." Then would follow an account of how the body of a well dressed man with a strand of wire wound tightly around his throat was found in a dive, probably lured there by some woman. "The only clue to identification was a box of fruit from which it was impossible to secure any fingerprints. The body is now in the morgue."

Poor Mr. Stalk shuddered and hurried on. He boarded the five twelve rather breathlessly, with a new and very romantic looking novel from the station book stand.

Mrs. Stalk met him at the door. She kissed him affectionately, had the fruit put on ice, and presently from across the supper table she detailed the tranquil gossip of the day. The new shrubs were doing beautifully, there was an invitation for dinner and bridge at the Crails', Junior had upset a can of paint on the veranda floor, and so on. Mr. Stalk nodded gravely at these items of household importance.

"Anything of interest happen to you today, dear?" she asked.

"No, nothing at all. The train was late and I got to the office after nine. Otherwise nothing out of the ordinary."



*A Story
of the
Lake Superior
Wilderness*

By J A M E S

*A
Gentleman
Five*

Illustrations by



Peter

IT WAS the blue jay that mellowed the fear of death in the swiftly beating heart of Peter McRae. He had always been a friend of the blue jays, and this particular bird had perched himself in a spruce top, screaming defiance at Peter's enemies and telling him not to be afraid.

Without going beyond his fourteen-year-old power of reasoning, Peter had a strange and abiding faith in the Canadian blue jay tribe. He was a boy's bird, if there ever was one, with his everlasting cocksureness, his persevering courage and his hundred and one little tricks of outlawry and piracy—a bird always ready for a fight, that never ran away from trouble, and that lived up beautifully to the man-made law, "Do others before others do you." He was a gentleman and a sportsman even if he was a robber and a pest, and Peter loved him.

He could see this particular blue jay clearly. Shouting voices and the crack of rifles had not frightened him away, and he was making a great commotion in the spruce tops, screaming until it seemed his raucous cries must split his throat. Then, too, there was the cheerful little sapsucker who persisted in pecking for grubs in the end of the big log behind which Peter and his father were hidden, and two newly mated red squirrels who chattered and ran up and down a tree a little farther on, one chasing the other.

A big yellow butterfly slowly opened and closed its fan-like wings almost within reach of Peter's hand.

These things kept the madness of utter fear out of the boy's brain. His thin, rather frail face was very white; his blue eyes were round and staring; his body, not so strong as it should have been, was doubled up behind the log, and his heart throbbed like a hammer inside him—but his courage was not gone.

From the blue jay and the sapsucker and the yellow butterfly his eyes rested upon the face of Donald McRae, his father. That father, so far back as Peter could remember clearly, had been not only a father, but mother and brother and pal as well. "One thing you must live up to all your life, Peter," this father had told him a hundred times, "and that is to be a pal to your own boy when you have one, just as you are now a pal of your dad's. If a dad and his boy are not pals they shouldn't have been born." So they had been that, with no secrets between them except one that had led up to this tragedy of today, and which the boy had not yet begun to understand. All he knew was

that for some mysterious reason they were fighting for their lives, and were now sheltered behind a log, and that men a little distance away were waiting to kill them with guns.

The man smiled at him and chuckled in a way Peter loved. But the smile and the chuckle did not hide the flame smoldering deep in his eyes, or the pallid tenseness of his face, or the trickle of blood that persisted in running down his cheek and wetting the soft roll of his collar. He was bareheaded and sweaty; his blond hair, very much like Peter's, was wildly disheveled; his hands gripped a gun, and lying on his stomach he had made himself a loophole by digging leaves and mold from under a crooked elbow in the log. Through this he had watched for his enemies. His grin was chummy and companionable as he turned to Peter. "Not afraid, are you?"

Peter shook his head. "I'm not much scared."

"Getting hungry?"

"No."

"Thirsty?"

"A little—not much."

S
OLIVER

CURWOOD

Comes to Fingers

Robert W. Stewart

The man laughed, fighting to make it appear natural. "You're a trump, Peter. God knows you're a trump!"

A rifle cracked in the thick fringe of balsams and jack pines a hundred and fifty yards from them, and a bullet struck the log with a sodden *chug*. The man wiped the blood from his cheek with a handkerchief that was stained red.

"Does it hurt, dad?"

"Nothing but a scratch, Peter."

He put his face to the ground and peered under the log again.

Peter changed his position, uncramped his legs and doubled himself up in another fashion, hugging the earth closely.

The log was almost at the edge of the river, which was a swollen flood, and the stream bent itself around like a hairpin, shutting them in on three sides. That was why they were safe, Peter's father had told him. No living thing could swim it to get behind them, and in front of them was a narrow neck of land which was open and clear right up to the thick edge of the swamp a rifle shot away. Across that open no one had dared to come.

A dozen times during the past hour Peter had wished the river was not there, for it held them prisoners even if it did keep their enemies back. In the dry months of summer it was not much more than a creek, with sand bars and pebbly shores and polished rocks sticking out of it. Now, in this flood time of spring, it had no shores and was a thing gone mad. It was deep and black, and swept past with a steady, growling roar, eating into the banks on its way, uprooting trees and slashing itself into cauldrons of boiling fury where the channel narrowed or where it leaped over the great boulders and rock debris of rapids. Under ordinary conditions the swollen stream would have lured and fascinated Peter. It came out of a vast and mysterious Canadian wilderness, and it disappeared into an adventure land of forests equally vast and strange.

Peter was staring at it when a hand rested itself gently on his head. Donald McRae was watching him, and a slow torture had burned itself like the scar of a living coal in his eyes and face. More than the earth he walked upon and more than the God he believed in, he loved this boy. It was Peter, with his thin, quizzical face, and his mind and courage developed beyond his strength and years, who had made life bearable and joyous for him. As he had worshiped the mother, linking his soul with hers until hers had been taken away, so he worshiped this one precious part of her she had left to him. Without Peter—

He choked back the thickness in his throat as he placed his hand on the boy's head. It was a habit with him to talk with Peter at times as if he were a man, and the man-way in which Peter's eyes met his now gave him courage.

"They won't try to cross that open before dark," he said. "They're afraid of us in the light, Peter. But they'll come when it's dark. And we can't wait. We've got to get away." The boy's face brightened. He had a consummate faith in



Mona

this father of his. "Does the creek frighten you, son?"

"It's pretty swift, but I'm not much scared of it."

"Of course not. You wouldn't be your dad's boy if you were. See that log down there, the big dry one, half in the water?" Peter

nodded. "When it begins to get dusk we'll crawl down and take a ride on that. It won't be hard to get away."

For the first time a tremor came in the boy's voice. "Dad, what are they trying to shoot us for? What have we done?"

Donald McRae made a pretense of peering through his loop-hole again. He wanted to cry out with the sickness that was in his heart, and in the same voice call down the vengeance of God upon the makers of that grim and merciless law which at last had come to corner and destroy him where he had built his little cabin home in the edge of the wilderness. It was impossible—now—to answer that question of Peter's, "What have we done?"

He raised his head and faced his boy.

A Gentleman Comes to Five Fingers

"It's five o'clock. We'd better have a bite to eat. When we take to the water it will spoil our grub."

From the pocket of a coat which lay at his side he took some biscuits and meat. Peter made a sandwich and munched at it, yearning for a little of the black river water to go with it. When the man had finished he drew from an inside pocket of the same coat a wallet, a pencil and a corked bottle half filled with matches. In the wallet he found a sheet of paper, and on this he wrote for several minutes, after which he folded the paper very tightly, thrust it into the bottle with the matches, and corked it in securely. Then he gave the bottle to Peter.

"Put that in your pocket," he said, "and remember what I'm telling you now, Peter. We're going to make for a place called Five Fingers. A man lives there whose name is Simon McQuarrie. Don't forget those two—Five Fingers and Simon McQuarrie. What I have written and put in the bottle is for him. If anything should happen to me—" He broke in upon himself with a cheerful laugh. "Of course nothing *will* happen, Peter, but if it should—you promise to take that bottle to him?"

"I'll take it."

"Where?"

"Five Fingers."

"Who?"

"Simon McQuarrie."

"Right. Now keep watch through this hole while I cut some leather strings out of the tops of my boots. We may need them to harness the log with when we go to sea. Won't they be surprised when they come and find us gone—eh—Peter?"

"You bet they will!" agreed Peter fervently.

Quietly he began watching the open through the hole which his father had made under the log. He breathed a little more tensely, for he realized the deadly importance of his vigil. Yesterday one of his ambitions had been to wear a uniform when he was old enough, one with stripes and brass buttons, and with a big revolver fastened to a cord hung round his neck. He had looked upon the wilderness police with the awe of a youngster who loved romance and adventure. Today he hated them. Only a little while ago he had waited for his father at their cabin, with a good dinner ready for him. Then his father had come, galloping on a horse Peter had never seen before.

"I've had a little trouble with the police, Peter, and we've got to hit into the woods," he had said.

The suddenness of it had taken Peter's breath away. They did not wait to eat any of the dinner he had prepared. Even then the police almost caught them before they reached this log. There were four of them. His father had kept them back with his rifle, and Peter was disappointed in his marksmanship. He was sure he could have done better himself. His father missed every time, even though his bullets did go close enough to make their enemies dodge behind trees. And always before that he had been proud of his father's shooting!

His hand touched the cool barrel of the rifle, and a thrill ran through him. It was a thing he had never felt before. He was sure *he* would not miss if he could only be given a chance, for he had often hit rabbits at that distance of a hundred and fifty yards, and a man was many times larger than a rabbit. An inch at a time, slowly and carefully so that his father would not notice what he was doing, he poked the barrel of the rifle through the hole. He would be ready, anyway.

"You see, Peter," his father was saying as he cut a thin strip from his boot top, "I couldn't leave you in the cabin alone. I've got to get you down to Five Fingers. If Simon McQuarrie isn't there you wait for him. And don't show anyone else that paper in the bottle!"

Peter was not listening. His heart had given a sudden terrific jump and was half choking him. In the edge of a clump of dwarf banksians something had moved. And then his father turned—just in time to catch his hand, to stop his finger at the trigger, to drag him back from the hole. Never as long as he lived would he forget the terrible look that had come into his father's face. To hide it Donald McRae leaned over his son and hugged him close in his arms, and for a space the law might have descended upon them without resistance.

From the shelter of the evergreens Corporal Crear of the Provincial Police was looking toward the log. His men were lying close about him.

"We've got to go out and get him when it's dark enough," he said. "Don't shoot unless you have to, but if that happens—shoot straight. Only be sure it's not the kid."

The shadows came swiftly. The sun left only a golden glow above the forest. The blue jay and the sapsucker were gone.

Out of the woods came the melodious dusk song of red squirrels. The rush of the river seemed more gentle and lost its menace for Peter. The churning turmoil of the distant rapids was mellowed in a soft mist, and a little later they could not make out clearly the driftwood going down with the stream.

"Now is our time," said Peter's father. "Creep after me, flat on your stomach."

It took them only a minute to reach the big dry log. They could move freely here, for the upward dip of the bank concealed them. Donald McRae did not let Peter guess the tension he was under as he worked. He stood his rifle where the police would easily find it and laughed softly as he tied one end of a stout leather thong about Peter's wrist and the other end about his own. After that he rolled the log into the water and tested it to get its proper balance and tied the other leather thongs to a projecting stub.

"It's just right," he announced cheerfully. "A canoe couldn't have been better built for us, Peter. Are you ready?"

"I'm ready," said Peter.

He was in the water to his knees; now he went in to his waist. It was cold, biting cold; his teeth clicked, but he did not say anything about it. He looped his arms about the stub and through one of the leather thongs, and from the opposite side of the log his father twisted the fingers of one hand tightly in his coat. Then they began to move. His feet lost bottom and the cold water shot up to his armpits, taking his breath away. His father grinned cheerfully at him and he tried to grin back. In a moment they were in the current and the shore began to slip past them with amazing swiftness.

Their log had swung quickly into mid-stream, and they were overtaking a more slowly moving mass of driftwood. The thought came to Peter that it was like a race. Then something alive caught his eyes on the flotsam. It was a furry, cat-like creature with short, perky ears and a fox's face, and he could almost have touched it with his hands when they passed.

"A fisher-cat," said his father. "He will have a nice swim when he hits the rapids!"

Peter wondered just how much of a chance the fisher-cat had. He shivered. The roar of the rapids was growing, and it was no longer pleasant to hear. The musical cadence which distance had given it was gone, and a sullen, snarling undertone of menace and wrath began to pound at the drums of his ears. In the twilight it looked as though they were racing straight into the mouth of a huge churn out of which milky froth was spouting.

The man's hand tightened its hold on Peter.

"Hang on and don't get scared," he cried. "We'll go through this like a rubber ball!"

That was the last Peter heard of his voice, and suddenly his father's face was blotted out from his vision. A huge mouth opened and engulfed them. He could feel himself going down it, with roaring gloom and mighty explosions of water bursting itself against great rocks all about him. For a space which seemed an eternity he gave himself up for lost, and he wanted to scream out to his father. But the water smothered him. It thrust him under, buried him, then tossed him up to breathe. He hung on, as his father had told him, and after the three or four minutes which were so many hours to him he could breathe easier and the roaring grew less.

They had come through a half-mile of the rapids then. The last of the rocks snapped at them, like growling dogs at their heels, and suddenly the water grew deep and smooth where it swung shoreward in a great eddy. For the first time Peter felt a hurt. It was his father's hand, holding him in a grip that only death could have broken. And then he saw his father's face. Donald McRae was gasping for breath. Even Peter would never know the fight he had made to keep the log running right during those three or four minutes in the rapids.

Slowly the current brought them to the shore. It was the shore they wanted, too, with its deep evergreen forests and its hundreds of miles of untrailed hiding places. The big pool was dotted with drifting masses of debris. One of these, very near to them, Peter was sure he recognized. But the fisher-cat was no longer on it.

He was terribly cold, and when at last his father brought the end of the log to the shore and helped him out to dry ground the boy fell down in a sodden heap. He was ashamed of himself and tried to get up. Donald McRae took one of his hands.

"You must walk, Peter—run if you can. Come on!"

He almost dragged him into the darkness of the forest, and Peter began to use his legs. It made him feel better. But his teeth chattered and his body shook as if he had the ague. Two



Simon McQuarrie's heart ached. Yet a duty had been imposed upon him and he did not draw away from it.

or three hundred yards in the shelter of the timber they came to an overturned spruce tree, and near this was a birch.

Donald McRae stripped off an armful of the loose birch bark, and one of Peter's blue hands fished out the precious bottle of matches. Very soon the flames were leaping up joyously, and he felt their warmth entering into his body. He helped to gather wood. In a quarter of an hour there was a glow in his face, and the big backlog of pitch-filled cedar was a flaming furnace. Darkness settled heavily in the forest, and he was no longer afraid or uncomfortable as he continued to dry his clothes. His father, in a period between wood-gathering, cleaned his pipe and began to dry out some of his soaked tobacco. That was cheerful and inspiring. It always seemed chummier and more homelike to Peter when his father was smoking his pipe.

Later they broke off cedar and balsam boughs until they had a soft bed two feet deep within the warmth of the fire. When

the last thread in his clothing was dry Peter crept into this bed. He had no idea of sleeping but made himself a comfortable nest and sat bright-eyed while his father smoked.

A hundred times they had made camps together that were very much like this one. But there had never been the thrill of tonight. The cumulative significance of what had happened was just beginning to find itself in Peter's head. This night was different from all other nights. The darkness which had gathered heavily about them was different, the fire did not seem as friendly, and his father, smoking his pipe, was changed. Always in their adventuring they had been in quest of something—fish or venison, berries or fur. Now something was after them. It was this slow process of mental and physical change from the hunter into the hunted, and its understanding, that was creeping into Peter's soul.

He watched his father, and the brightness in his eyes—something new and strange that lay in them—was like a stab to

A Gentleman Comes to Five Fingers

Donald McRae. In this hour he saw the boy's soul changing. Peter, at last, was beginning to build up the truth. Something terrible must have happened—somewhere—or the police would not be after his father. He had believed the police were omniscient, that they hunted only bad people. That was what they were for—to shut bad people in prisons, or hang them, or shoot them. *And they were after his father!*

The man saw these things in Peter's eyes and in his pale, thin face. And suddenly a revulsion of horror and of rage swept over Peter. If the police said his father was bad they were liars. He hated them, and if the chance came to him he would get even with them.

He said nothing. But he got out of his nest in the evergreen boughs and sat close to his father against the log, and Donald McRae put his arm around him and puffed hard at his pipe to keep the firelight from revealing what was in his eyes. The world might be against him, but Peter would be like this, his friend and pal to the last. He knew it, and thanked God.

Peter did not know when he fell asleep. He was buried in the sweet-scented cedar and balsam when his father awakened him. He sat up and rubbed his eyes, and it came to him quickly where he was. The fire was out and dawn was breaking up the gloom of the forest. He missed the fire, and the bacon frying over it, and the pot of coffee steaming in the coals. Those were the usual things that greeted him when he woke up in camp.

They headed straight into the heart of the unexplored timberlands south and west, and with empty hands and no pack Donald McRae talked as cheerfully as though they had a week's rations with them. But his eyes were constantly questing for something to eat, and it occurred to him as a sort of tragedy that he had not tied his rifle to the log. He did not explain to Peter just why he had left it where the police would easily find it.

By midday their hunt for food had become a thrilling adventure to Peter. It stirred his blood even more than thought of their enemies, for the police seemed an interminable distance away now, shut out by miles of wilderness. There was something fascinating about it, too. There were birds about them and rabbit runways in every dip and swamp they

Peter held out. The sun was still up when they came from heavy timber into a long, narrow meadow running into a swamp on the other side. This was the sort of place Donald McRae had been looking for. In the edge of the swamp were rabbit runways beaten fresh and hard.

They chose the site for their camp in the rim of the high timber, and while Peter brought in fire-wood Donald made snares from another section of boot top. These he set in the runways. It was scarcely more than dusk when the first big snowshoe ran his head through a noose and found himself swinging at the end of a sapling. An hour later he was roasted, and in the light of their fire they divided the feast between them. Peter didn't mind the absence of salt and bread and potatoes. Nothing he could remember had ever tasted quite so good to Peter as the unseasoned rabbit.

Food and the warmth of the fire made him drowsy, and very soon after they had finished their supper Donald tucked him snugly into the bed of evergreens they had made and covered him with his coat. Peter fell asleep instantly, and for several minutes the man remained on his knees at his side, the smile of tenderness in his face changing slowly into a look of haggard grief. When he rose to his feet the luster had died out of his eyes and years had fallen upon his shoulders. He caught his breath sobbingly as he stared into the wall of chaotic darkness beyond the firelight. It was only Peter who counted now, and this night was the last Peter would be with him. Tomorrow he would be alone, an outlaw, a hunted man running



Peter was on the bully like a cat. His fists struck hard and furiously. This was no time to "play the game fair."

came to, and deer and moose and caribou tracks.

But there was nothing they could get at, except porcupines. During the morning they could have killed half a dozen of these animals with clubs, but each time porcupine flesh was suggested for dinner Peter made a grimace of revulsion. Twice they had tried it experimentally on their camping trips and both times it had nauseated him. He insisted he would rather starve than eat any more of that ill-smelling, fatty stuff the porcupine was made of.

"If you get too hungry we'll roast some lily roots," said Donald, "but if you can hold out until night we'll have the feast of our lives."

away to save his life. And Peter . . .

A moan came to his lips, a dry and broken cry of hopelessness, and his eyes fixed themselves in their anguish upon the heart of the fire. Without Peter, would God give him strength to live? What would the days be like—and the nights—and the months and years to come without Peter? For Peter was not only Peter. In taking the mother, God had given her soul back to him in the body of her boy. She was a part of him, speaking with his voice,

looking out of his eyes, loving with his love, a comrade and pal to the man in spirit even as she had been in her own sweet life. And now—tomorrow—he would lose them both. The law was after him. Its hounds would follow him.

He closed his eyes to shut out the thing that was hurting him. When he opened them a face seemed to



have taken form in the glow of the fire like a soul come to give him courage and resolution, sweetly sad in its inspiration, glorious in its consolation and cheer. Every day through the years this visioning of his wife had come to him; through those years she had walked hand in hand with him, she had been with him in the up-growing of Peter, had helped to teach him the love of God and the glory of nature, and had laughed and cried and sung with them as sunshine and shadow came. And always, in the darkest hours,

Donald McRae saw her face sweet and strong and never afraid.

"This is your last great fight for our Peter," her eyes seemed to say to him tonight. "You must be strong."

And then she was gone. He sat motionless and silent until the fire was only a red glow of ember and ash.

Toward dawn he built up the fire and cooked another rabbit which he caught in one of the snares. It was ready when Peter crawled out of his balsam bed. He did not know his father had not slept during the night. Donald McRae began to whistle when he saw the boy was awake, and fought to make the whistling cheerful.

He announced his plan to Peter as if it were born of sudden inspiration and happily solved a temporary problem for them. He told him about Five Fingers and their old friend Simon McQuarrie. Peter could just remember the Scotchman, and Simon's fat Dutch partner and friend, Herman Vogelaar. Donald McRae seemed to recall them now with great pleasure, and he

was sure Peter would enjoy his little visit with them. Of course he would come back soon, and maybe they would live at Five Fingers if Peter liked it there. He continued to build up the lie, but something of trouble remained deep back in the boy's eyes. Donald tried not to see it too much, for it was the look he would have seen in the woman's eyes if she had been in Peter's place.

They traveled until noon and ate their luncheon. The afternoon was well gone when faintly they heard the striking of an ax ahead of them. A quarter of an hour later they could hear several axes, and the distant crash of a falling tree. Donald McRae steeled his heart, and stopped. Yet in this moment he was smiling.

"That is Five Fingers," he said. "Can you go on alone, Peter?"

Peter nodded. "But I don't want to," he said. "I want to go with you, dad."

A Gentleman Comes to Five Fingers

"You must go to Five Fingers, Peter. I'll come back soon. I promise that. I'll come back—soon."

A gulp came in Peter's throat.

"I'm not tired. I can go a long ways yet, dad. I'd rather go with you."

The man drew him in his arms.

"I'll come back tomorrow," he lied, fighting to speak the words calmly. "And you must get the paper in the bottle to Simon McQuarrie as soon as you can. You aren't afraid to go alone, are you, Peter?"

"No, I'm not afraid."

"Then—you must go." He hugged him close for a moment, and rested his cheek on Peter's disheveled hair. "Maybe I'll come back tonight," he whispered desperately. "Good by, little pal. Hurry—and give Simon the paper—and—good by!"

His lips burned against Peter's forehead. It was that kiss which startled Peter, and when his father turned away, and then looked back smiling and waving a hand, a suffocating feeling remained in Peter's heart. He tried to wave his hand in response, but in a moment it fell limply to his side. Donald McRae saw the gesture and a sob came in his breath. He disappeared behind a windfall, stopped and looked back. Peter was slowly turning toward Five Fingers. The small figure was pathetic in its aloneness. Twice it paused and turned, and then went on, and was hidden at last by a screen of evergreens.

"God be with you and care for you, Peter, and give me strength to bear this parting," sobbed Donald McRae.

With white and haggard face he turned into the North.

Beyond the thicket of young jack pines Peter did not hurry. His feet dragged, and he listened, hoping he would hear his father's voice calling him back. In half an hour he did not travel far beyond the evergreens. Then he knew his father was gone. He continued in the direction of Five Fingers, recalling his promises. Tonight or tomorrow his father would return. He hoped it would be tonight, for there was a lump in his throat which he could not get rid of, and something in his heart which frightened him with suspicions and fears which he was too young to analyze.

The chopping of the axes had ceased, but he knew he was heading in the right direction. He came into openings filled with the stumps of trees that had been cut down, and these clearings were carpeted with white and pink spring flowers and masses of violets. He had never seen such beautiful violets, or so many birds at this season of the year. There were robins and thrushes and dozens of little warblers and brush sparrows. The sun was delightfully warm, too, though in another hour it would be settling behind the tree tops. In this glory of peace and quiet he proceeded quietly and cautiously, for his father had taught him always to do that in the forest. So he came without sound of footfall or crackling brush to the edge of a little opening beyond a thicket of poplars and birch, and here he stopped suddenly and his heart jumped up into his mouth.

Standing in a warm pool of sunlight not twenty feet away from his concealment was a young girl. She was almost as tall as Peter and so lovely to look upon that he stared at her in amazement and admiration. His first vision was of her face and a pair of beautiful dark eyes laughing up at a red squirrel chattering in a tree top. Then she sat down, gathering her flowers about her, and eyes and face were lost to him in a mass of shining black hair that fell thickly about her.

At first he was astonished; now timidity and fear crept upon him and he wanted to steal away as quietly as he had come. He drew back a step and was preparing for the next when an unexpected interruption rooted him to the spot. The wild and agonized yelping of a dog came from the thick brush beyond.

Instantly she was on her feet, her slim body quivering. Then she called, "Buddy—Buddy—come here!"

With a series of pain-filled yelps the creature called Buddy responded. He darted out of the brush and came like a streak across the open. He cringed at the girl's feet and kissed the hand she reached down to him. But she did not look at him. She had dropped her flowers and her attitude was fierce and expectant as she waited.

Peter could see the bushes moving across the open and in a moment a boy burst through them. He was half again as big as Peter, and he had a stick in his hand. He followed the dog, half running, and Peter began to hate him as he came. "Any person who will strike a dog should never have been born," his father had taught him from the beginning; and this boy with his thick red face and hulking body had been beating the pup. He was panting triumph when he came up, and the pup slunk closer between the feet of his mistress. The pursuer was at

least two years older than Peter. He had thick hands and little eyes and a bullet head.

For an instant Peter saw the girl's eyes. They were pools of fire. Then like a tigress she was at the other. Her hands struck at his face and for a moment the bully was caught at a disadvantage. He dropped his stick and caught her in his arms. His hands buried themselves in her hair, and Peter saw her blows becoming more and more futile. The pup snarled and darted in at the boy's feet. A kick sent him howling.

Horror and rage possessed Peter when he saw the girl's head thrust backward, and without a sound he ran out of his cover and caught her assailant by the throat. Then, when the girl was freed, he struck. That was another thing his father had taught him, to fight when it was necessary to fight—and *always for a woman*. His fists struck hard and furiously, and he heard a bellow of alarm and pain from the bully. The older boy stumbled and fell, and Peter was on him like a cat. He realized this was no time to "play the game fair." They rolled and twisted on the ground, and blood streamed from the bully's nose and mouth. Once Peter saw the girl. She was standing very near, her lips parted, her wonderful eyes shining at him. That glimpse of her was a mighty encouragement. He fought harder, driving his fists home, and kicking.

Then they were on their feet again.

It was the bully who renewed the battle. Mauled and bleeding, he had recovered from the surprise attack and his greater bulk and weight began to tell. Exhausted by two days and a night of hunger and flight, Peter felt his strength going. He went down. It was then he caught his second glimpse of the girl. She had caught up the stick and was standing over them. He could hear the stick as it struck blow after blow, and his enemy rolled over, half stunned. They were both at the bully then, Peter with his fists and the girl with her stick, and the older boy took to his heels in a wild flight for the safety of the thicket.

Peter wiped his nose and mouth with his sleeve and gasped hard to get his breath. The girl was breathing hard, too, and she was looking at him with such wonder and gladness in her eyes that he wished he was back in the timber again.

Then she came to him and began nursing his face with a soft handkerchief, and said things which he could not remember afterward, and Buddy the pup jumped up against him, wagging his tail.

Peter drew back and tried to grin. For a moment he had felt enormously uncomfortable in the presence of this lovely little goddess of the woods, with her soft handkerchief dabbing at his face. Now his old cheer returned. He was glad the fight was over and was strongly conscious that the girl had played no small part in the final victory.

So he said apologetically, "He'd got me if you hadn't come in with the stick."

She stood back and looked at him. She was younger than he, probably by a year or so, but to Peter she appeared to be infinitely older in these first minutes of their acquaintance. It bothered him to meet her eyes squarely, they were so big and dark and filled with soft fire, like the velvety, jet-black hair that streamed in dishevelment about her.

"He is twice as big as you," she retorted. "I hate him. He belongs with the tug from Fort William, and every time he comes we have a fight."

"He's a—a woman-hitter," said Peter.

She accepted his compliment with a dignified nod. Then she stamped her foot and shook her stick in the direction the bully had gone. "If he ever tries to do again what he tried today—I'll—I'll—"

"He won't while I'm around," helped out Peter, swelling with a bit of pugnacious pride. "I wasn't in good shape, and I've been traveling pretty hard, and we didn't have a lot to eat. I can lick him when I'm fed up and rested."

The girl was almost womanly in her swift intuition. Her eyes glowed softly at Peter. "Who are you?" she asked gently. "I am Mona Guyon, and I live with Josette and Marie Antoinette Gourdon at Five Fingers."

"I'm Peter," said the boy. "Peter McRae."

"Where you from?"

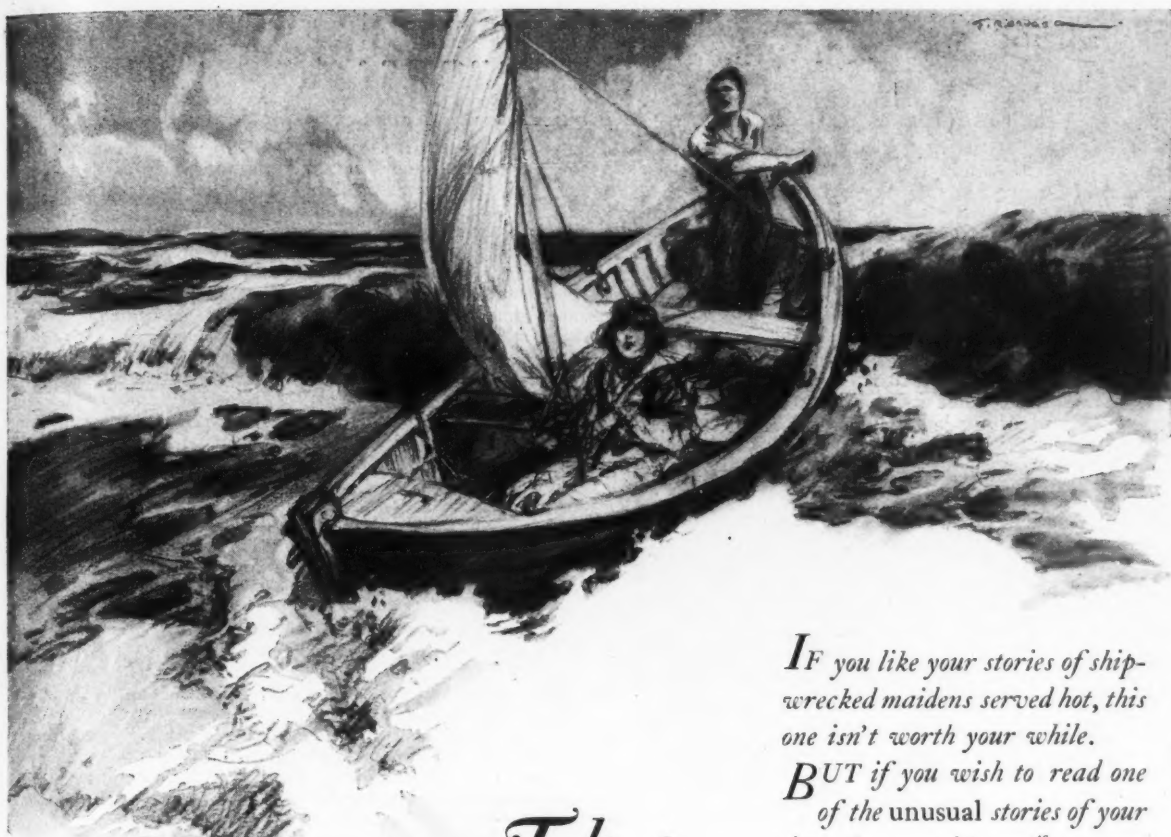
Peter took time to swallow. His father had not told him how to answer questions.

"From away off there, miles and miles. My father brought me until we could hear the axes, and then I came on alone. He's coming tonight or tomorrow."

"Is your mother with him?"

"She's dead."

He was not looking at her when she (Continued on page 160)



If you like your stories of shipwrecked maidens served hot, this one isn't worth your while.

BUT if you wish to read one of the unusual stories of your day, because it's 99¹⁰/₁₀₀ percent true—then read it by all means.

The Knife

By GOUVERNEUR MORRIS

Illustrations by F. R. Gruger

ALMOST from the first moment of finding that they were alone together in an open boat Miss Allison had not liked the way in which the big sailor Arrentrue looked at her. And now that it seemed as if their lives were going to be continued for a while, and that she had an opportunity to consider in what manner under the difficult circumstances her own particular life could best be lived, she liked the expression which sometimes came into his eyes, when he looked at her, even less.

On the whole, it was a defiant expression.

In one brief flash it seemed to defy—the difference in their breeding and in their stations. It seemed to defy convention and religion. It seemed to defy pity and chivalry. It seemed to defy God.

He was not a giant; but he was a big, smooth-moving man, with big, thick-fingered, powerful hands. In those hands she would have been as powerless to save herself as a little child.

For the first time in her life Miss Allison found herself wishing that she was homely, repellent even—the kind of a girl that men shrink from. But she knew, and she knew it by experience, which is the best of all teachers, that to many men she was arrestingly attractive. Experience had taught her that to many men she was so attractive that they did not even stop to discover the qualities of her mind or the facts of her fortune before they began to make love to her.

To her world it had seemed a wonder that she had never married. But the wonder was in her own heart. She had never loved. And though more than once her affections had been excitingly engaged, a certain fastidiousness and a hatred of anything extravagant, which would be wholly outside of her own experience, had saved her from falling a victim to them. No man of her acquaintance had ever quite measured up to that ideal of physical and mental perfection to which without too much revolt and disgust a girl could be expected to dedicate at once her soul and her body. Indeed, Miss Allison had always vaguely believed that it might be easier to survive a mistake of bestowal with the former than with the latter. It would be better, she had always felt, to find oneself at the mercy of a secret bigot than of a secret beast.

But now, to her horror, it seemed as if circumstances had perhaps placed her at the disposal of both.

If Arrentrue was not a bigot he was of an ignorance and stupidity which amounted to the same thing. And that he was a beast at heart she believed without question.

You had only to look at him; the low, narrow forehead, the small, deep-set eyes, cunning but not clever, the faun-like, close-cropped ears, the thick round neck, and the tawny Mediterranean coloring of his skin.

Of course he was a beast at heart! It was not even worth while to plumb into the exact inner essence of a thing that was

beast all over. You do not drill a diamond to see if it is diamond all through. You do not disembowel a boar to see if he has the heart of a pig.

All that a man like Arrentrue needs, she thought, is liquor and opportunity. There was no liquor here, but there was an opportunity which stretched itself all the way around the clock and embraced every minute of the night and day. And there was in addition an isolation and an immunity from consequence which might very well take the place of liquor.

It was a good thing that she had the knife. It was a better thing if he did not know that she had it. The sudden discovery that it was in her possession and that she had the courage and strength to slash with it might put over-confidence to route. If it were his knife he would have missed it and perhaps asked about it. He had not asked about anything, nor had he at any time behaved as if he had lost something. It was probable that he had never seen the knife at all. All but a part of the handle had been concealed by a baling tin, and he had been too busy rigging a sail for the boat to notice it. She herself had kept an eye on it for hours, and at last when Arrentrue had gone forward to better the stepping of the long oar which was doing duty as a mast, she had leaned over quickly and possessed herself of it.

It was a wicked looking knife. The blade was six inches long, and although it was rusty and plastered with old fish scales she had ascertained that the edge was still sharp, in spite of the nicks, and the point was like that of a needle.

At the first opportunity she had cleaned the knife of fish scales by rubbing it with a stone, and in the same way she had removed a good deal of the rust. With the knife and a little luck she felt that she might be on terms of physical equality with Arrentrue.

The base of the cliff, beyond the reach of the highest tide, was honeycombed with caves. Arrentrue inhabited one of these, and Miss Allison might be said to have inhabited the others. For during the day she would pick out the one in which she was to pass the night, and when darkness came she would move her belongings into it. It would not be any too easy for Arrentrue to find her.

It was a miserable life they lived. If they had been friends and equals it would not have been a gay life. They had molluscs to eat, and fish, seaweeds and wild asparagus. The nights were cold. There was a spring of fresh water in one of the caves, or they must have perished, but it was hard water with a flat, unpleasant taste.

There was but a mile of beach and thereafter in each direction precipitous cliffs as far as the eye could reach.

They had found a way up the cliffs, but it led nowhere else. From the top one saw on the one side, far below, the sea, very shallow and ribbed with rock ledges, and on the other, desert, which, like the sea, extended to the horizon.

They had ventured a little way into the desert, and the heat had driven them back to the sea.

As for the boat into which they had tumbled when the yacht sank, it was smashed beyond their means of repair.

There seemed to be no escape in any direction, nor any hope of rescue.

With the death of her uncle—a piece of spar had smashed in his head even as she was reaching out her hand to help him into the boat—Miss Allison had become automatically one of the richest young women in the world. She had in that moment inherited vast resources and responsibilities, and the chance to do good upon an immense scale. And here she was without power to command a change of linen for her body or a comb for her hair!

She sometimes wondered how upon such miserable terms she was able to accept life at all. She was always hungry, always cold at night, her beautiful hair was in the most unimaginable and horrible tangle, her nails were rough and broken; and with a man who looked at her the way Arrentrue did, there could be no companionship or comfort.

Misery made head in her like steam in a boiler. She felt that she must talk to someone or burst. Arrentrue wasn't someone. He was nothing but a beast, and a disgusting threat.

She couldn't talk to him. She went where the sand was firm and the sound of the waves breaking drowned the sound of her voice, and walked by the hour raging and talking to herself. She addressed herself as *You*, and was always rather angry with herself.

"You ought to have more pride," she would say, "than to accept life upon such terms. Why do you want to go on living, you fool? Either death will be peace and silence, or it will be better than this life. It couldn't be worse. You've a perfectly

good sea to drown in, a first-class cliff to fall from and a sharp knife to stab yourself with, but you go on living and suffering and being frightened . . ." etc., etc.

At times she raged and at times she raved. She did not, however, kill herself or even attempt to. But she believed that one day she must, out of sheer miserableness and fear of Arrentrue and being so thwarted in all her wishes and impulses and tastes. To that end she had often her knife in one hand and a smooth stone in the other with which she worked at the edge and the point and gradually polished off the rust and the pits which it had dug in the metal. She made a keen, bright weapon of it. She could have bobbed her hair with it, and longed to, and would have done so if Arrentrue would not have guessed that she had an edged tool hidden away somewhere.

Of Arrentrue she saw as little as possible, and he made no effort to force his company upon her. He was as one who bides his time. Whenever they had to be together, however, he kept his eyes steadily upon her with that queer speculating look in them.

Several times, once when there had been a long troubled silence between them, he had spoken a phrase which had the power to bring her heart leaping into her throat. He had said, fixing her more fast than ever with that defiant speculative look, and in a voice which seemed to find the art of speech difficult:

"You don't know what I'm thinking about."

And on each occasion she had answered rudely and sharply to this effect:

"How should I? Why should you bother to think about anything in a place like this? I don't."

On two occasions this had silenced him completely, but on the third occasion it had silenced him only for about half an hour. During that half-hour he dug with his bare toes in the sand. Then he said:

"You do so think about something or other. You couldn't help it. Here I been sitting digging in the sand and trying not to think, and it ain't in me. There ain't much in my head, but what there is keeps turnin' over. It's the same with you, and more than with me because you got eddication to go on . . . Bet you don't know what I'm thinking about now . . ."

She had been goaded into saying:

"Of course I don't. How should I? What are you thinking about?"

"I am thinking," he said, "about your hair."

She turned white and crimson, like certain camellias, and involuntarily her hands flew to her hair. She was sure that he was going to tell her that it was pretty and to open his campaign with clumsy compliments. But he didn't.

"What about my hair?" she said sharply. "It's a mess."

"That's just it," he said "That's just what I been thinking. It's all snarled like a lot o' rope ends and it's got pitch in it, out of the boat. I been thinking you'd be more comfortable if it was cut short."

If he had said something nice about her hair she would have been angry; to have him say what he had said made her still angrier. What business of his was her hair, anyway?

"That would be difficult without scissors, wouldn't it?" she asked.

"It could be done with a knife," he said, "if we had one."

"Yes," said Miss Allison, "if—"

And she looked him suspiciously in the face. Did he know about the knife or didn't he? Apparently not. She breathed a sigh of relief.

"It could be rubbed off hair by hair against a sharp stone," he said, "until it was all short and comfortable. It would take a long time. But"—here he himself reddened a little—"I wouldn't mind the time and the trouble if you wanted me to do it for you."

The thought of subjecting her hair to the mercies of those brute fingers made Miss Allison shudder. And she said:

"Don't worry about my hair. I don't."

But Arrentrue was in a persistent and an inventive mood. "I'd be willing," he said, giving one of his powerful thighs a triumphant slap, "I'd be willing to waste one of our matches on it. I'd be willing to make a fire and burn your hair off for you."

"And I wouldn't," said Miss Allison, "so there we are . . . And I'm going for a long walk."

"For how long?"

"Does it matter? Up and down the beach till I'm tired."

"I been thinking that if you cared to go to the far end of the beach, behind the big rock, and wouldn't mind staying put for an hour, I'd go in for a bathe. Lord knows I need one."

"By all means," said Miss Allison. "The moment my back is turned you will be safe from observation."



"Bet you don't know what I'm thinking about," said the man. Did he know about the knife or didn't he?

And she arose and walked off towards the farther end of the beach. But he called after her.

"Say!"

She turned toward him.

"Yes?"

"There's a bit o' nice sand beyond the big rock."

"I know there is. What of it?"

"Nothing. Only a bathe wouldn't hurt you any."

Miss Allison had never been so insulted in her life. It would have been bad enough if she hadn't needed a bath. But she did need one. Badly.

And when she came to the stretch of fine sand beyond the big rock and looked back—though she had promised that she wouldn't—and saw that the distant Arrentrue was in the sea to his armpits and splashing like a schoolboy, she stripped quickly and literally flung (Continued on page 171)

By Kathleen

NORRIS



That The

Illustrations by
James Montgomery
Flagg

Ellen smiled confidentially at the butler, shaking her head at the chops.

"EXCUSE ME," said Mr. Clement A. Riordan, looking in at the doorway of the Kane kitchen. "I didn't know the circus was in town."

Ellen Murphy, who was on her knees beside the oven, slammed the iron door of the broiler shut, sat back on her heels and regarded her caller with a flushed and beautiful face half vexed and half amused.

"Well, you'd *think* it was a circus!" she conceded, with a glance about the kitchen. "Quit that, Matt Curley!" she added sternly to one of the children who were variously disposed about the place. "Leave the baby be!"

The baby, a short year old, was Joe, the child of Ellen's sister, Lizzie-Kate. He sat in a shabby high chair, beating his feet about restlessly as if trying to fly, waving his pudgy arms and watching the faces of the other children with anxiety, eagerness, admiration, jealousy and delight. Joe was a soft, fat little body, with a big head covered with fluffy rings of light brown hair, a mush-smearing countenance and a dragged little colorless gown.

Next in age was Annie Curley's Frank, two years old, staggering absorbedly from chair to sink and sink to table. Then came Joe's brother, Lizzie-Kate's Flurry, who was a stout, imperious four; then Annie Curley's Helen, a ladylike six year old child with tight black curls, who wore a snug, gay plaid apron over a thick serge dress and was playing house by herself in the corner; and lastly, Annie Curley's Matt, who was eight, a thin, sensitive-faced boy, freckled, and with a tooth missing.

"Meet the family!" said Ellen as Clem's surprised eyes moved from one to the other.

Clem removed from a kitchen chair a broken flour sifter half filled with pebbles, a dish towel made of a soft old flour bag, a row of thick, rough jelly glasses variously containing crayon pencils, paper dolls cut from magazines and a string of spoons, and a small red sweater worn to holes in the elbows, lacking buttons, and sticky and black down the front; and sat down.

Helen Curley, whose house and privacy he had innocently raided, retired to a corner under the roller towel and glared at him. Outside it was raining, raining, raining. The late October day was hopelessly gray; there was a desolate slopping and splashing on the Kanes' dark back porch, and whenever the door opened cold fresh draughts of wet air blasted the heavy, warm atmosphere of the kitchen.

Matt was making a windmill. Flurry was rattling the tin tops of soda bottles in a glass milk bottle. The baby watched,

screamed for anything he fancied, immediately threw whatever was given him upon the floor.

The sink was heaped high with dishes, the stove was littered with pots and pans, on the crumpled red tablecloth of the table were cups and sugar bowl, and milk still in the delivery bottle, and crumbs, and a loaf with a knife, and butter soft and salty in a blue saucer.

And every chair and window ledge was burdened; a broom leaned casually against a wall, the wood box had been hauled out into the center of the floor and decorated with two flags, paper clippings strewed the room, and alphabet blocks, tin cars, cloth dolls and all the junk that children exhume on a rainy holiday were underfoot.

It was just noon; the whistles were shrilling on all sides as Clem entered. Ellen was obviously preparing a meal for the quintette; she now referred to the oven again, slammed the door and got to her feet, immediately taking her place at the dish pan, and rather hopelessly attacking the heap.

"I thought you were going out with me!" protested Clem, his dream of seeing a movie with her dying an unnatural and violent death. Ellen sent him a look of patient contempt.

"Not unless you'd like to take the kids," she suggested.

"Leave us wait until we get married," Clem countered, enjoying her quick rush of bright color.

"Well, and that'll be about enough from *you*!" Ellen told him. "There's sickness over to the Callahans," she observed.

"Lizzie-Kate's went over?" asked Clem, of Ellen's sister.

"Sure," the girl answered briefly.

They exchanged a mild, level look. And Clem knew, and she knew that she had told him, that poor Annie Callahan's fatherless baby would be born before night. The man understood perfectly what had happened; had he not known many a similar situation among his friends and neighbors? Even his somewhat unimaginative mind could visualize the early call for Lizzie-Kate, with whom the brilliant Ellen made her home, the "Say I'll be right over!" the warm bustle of sympathetic, busy women at the Callahan house.

But he merely said: "That's too bad." And idly and superfluously added: "And you've got the kids for the day?"

"No," said Ellen simply, "I'm starrin' in the fillum 'Passion's Playground,' and this is part of the set!"

"It's some set, all right," Clem agreed, conceding only an absent-minded smile to her sarcasm. "There's none of them tongue-tied, is there?" he added, of the children.

A Story of The Secret of Happiness

Night: Vanderventer Mansion



"Friday—yes, I know," said the great lady. "Bring some eggs, Cudworth."

"Nor paralyzed, neither—quit that, Flurry!" said Ellen.

"My Gawd!" Clem ejaculated under his breath as a general pushing of chairs and clattering of plates announced the meal. He was inexpert, and unfamiliar with the dishes and spoons of the Kane kitchen, but he could help, and Ellen accepted his assistance with an unusual graciousness of manner.

Mrs. Murphy, the widowed mother of Ellen and Lizzie-Kate, small, brown and spotted of face, swathed in dingy weeds, and morose in manner, came in about half-past twelve, to sit at the end of the table, drink very strong tea loaded with cream and sugar, and speculate dismally upon the weather. She had heard nothing of the emergency at the Callahans', and the subject, even with Clem present, gave her naturally pessimistic temperament a splendid opening.

She proposed, however, to remain with the children during the next hour or two, and as Kate Oliver and her latest born turned up just as the dishes were washed, Ellen was free.

So Ellen put on the beaver hat with the wide brim and her snug, long coat, and she looked so ravishing as she promised to stop at the Callahans' and inquire for Annie before she went to the movie, and to be back early, that Clem blundered against the kitchen door, going out, like a dizzy bee, and had only a hazy vision of small sticky faces and kitchen confusion as he stammered his good byes. They were going to the movies, of course, at the magnificent new "Bon Ton," only five blocks away. Clem felt that his feet hardly touched the ground as he walked beside her.

It was clearing fast when they came out of the big playhouse at four o'clock, after two delicious hours of "Grabbing Wives," and the eleventh episode of "The Trail of the Snake." In the former, Ellen's interest, and even her envy, had been excited by a scene perhaps best indicated by its heading:

That Night: The Vanderventer Mansion. Chauncey gives Yvonne a party in his Long Island home.

The Vanderventer home had been represented as possessing whole arcades of Corinthian columns, surrounding a deep pool of Roman simplicity and beauty. About the pool were palms, trellised vines and drooping wistaria, and to amuse his future wife Chauncey had invited some five hundred friends to a great ball, in the most fantastic of fancy dresses.

Gondolas filled with laughing little living Cupids floated upon the canal between the dances, and presently there burst from a screen of blossoms a score of girls in floating ethereal draperies,

about whom great iridescent soap bubbles rose as they danced, and upon whom descended thousands of brilliant toy balloons, to mingle and burst in their turn among the filmier globes.

This homelike scene stirred Ellen's imagination. She said to Clem and Alice Riordan, his sister, and Alice's new beau, John Walsh, whom they had quite by accident met in the street, that she wished she might have been at that party.

By this time all thought of Annie Callahan and of the children at Lizzie-Kate's had departed from Ellen's amusement-loving little mind, and the quartette was grouped over a spider-legged table in a candy shop in Sixth Avenue.

The table was of oxidized brass, with a deep pit set under a glass pane in the center, affording a small, casket-like place lined with tufted pink satin, where "Tully's Saturday Night Mixture" was displayed in narrow boxes. The girls laid their chain purses and beauty cases and gloves upon the clear glass, and Ellen intoxicated Clem by permitting here some of the small liberties her manner had distinctly forbidden in the scented, music-flooded darkness of the theater. She let his hand rest over her own, as if by accident, for several throbbing and singing and dizzying minutes, and she merely raised impudent, up-curling eyelashes, and conceded to her beautiful mouth only the slightest twitch of amusement and warning when, again as by accident, he called her "dear" when he held her coat for her.

"You'd pass a thousand of those Long Island estates and never know what was going on in them!" she said, still wrapped in a shining memory of Chauncey Vanderventer's party.

"They don't act like that—runnin' round them canals and so on!" young John Walsh said sturdily.

"I'll bet they just build things like that in the fillum studios!" Alice Riordan offered uncertainly.

"If you ask me, it's the bunk!" Clem added, over his refection of sliced bananas, ice cream, cherries, and whipped cream.

Ellen flushed resentfully.

"Why should it be?" she challenged them, indefinitely annoyed. "When the movies have stories about places like ours—our house, or the office, or anything out of doors—they have it true, don't they? That fillum we saw about the Eyetalians, Clem," she added; "don't you remember how they had macaroni, and the kids all wrapped up in shawls, and pictures of the Blessed Virgin and first communion photographs on the walls? And don't you remember the old woman with a handkerchief on her head, for all the world like Mrs. Baldocchi, bringing in wood? Well——"



"Excuse me," said Mr. Clement A. Riordan. "I didn't know the circus was in town." Ellen

"Well, that's different. But do you mean you think they ackshally have things like that party today in that picture?" Clem demanded, superior and amused.

"I know they do!" Ellen said stubbornly.

"Oh, Ellen, I don't believe decent people would!" Alice said, faintly scandalized. "Half dressed that way, and dancing in those bubbles, and all!"

"Well, perhaps they wouldn't have—exactly that—every night," Ellen conceded, slowly. And in the burst of laughter at this absurdity she very wholesomely joined. Alice, far more concerned in a little birthday party she was to give herself in a few days' time, decided to order Tully's ice cream with no further delay.

A yellow sunlight was shining in a clearing, warm, sticky world as they all sauntered back to Lizzie-Kate's at five o'clock. Leaves were shining and twinkling everywhere, pools sparkled, and tomorrow would be full Indian Summer.

The Kane yard was a joyous riot of muddy, happy children, and in the Kane kitchen Mrs. Murphy still sat disconsolate but placid, and Lizzie-Kate, back in her checked apron, was cheerfully busy about supper. Life was normal again, and Annie Callahan had a grand young boy, reported Mrs. Murphy, that she burst out crying the way it would break

your heart to hear her, and she kissin' it, the poor, weak, widowed creature! And she was already calling the poor "post humorous" young one "Joe," for the father he would never see in this life.

"And Annie, mind you, sent you her special love, Ellen," said Lizzie-Kate, "and she said that you were a darling to mind the children today!"

"I didn't do much," said Ellen, ashamed.

"Oh, and there's a message for you!" Lizzie-Kate was suddenly reminded as she sprinkled raisins into a bread pudding. "You remember Mrs. Humboldt—the rich Mrs. Humboldt—that I took care of for three weeks? My first case, I think it was," mused Lizzie-Kate, with a sudden recollection of her tired, thin, worn young self plump and trim and freshly starched as a nurse a few years ago.

"I remember she sent me a real hair Kewpie" Ellen assented. "Isn't she John Beatty's aunt?"

"Yes, that's the one. Well," said Lizzie-Kate, now anxiously scalding a custard, "she was here about ten minutes ago. Seems—does this puff, mama, or does it shrink up?"

"The stale bread'll kind of die down on you," her mother predicted, "but the fresh bread puffs to nothing. A child will bloat on you something terrible—"



JAMES MONTGOMERY FLAGG

regarded him with a flushed and beautiful face. "Well, you'd think it was a circus," she conceded.

"Oh, go on, for heaven's sakes, Lizzie-Kate!" Ellen urged, all eagerness.

"Well, Mrs. Humboldt's big car stopped here about an hour ago," resumed Lizzie-Kate, "and she came in. It seems her sister, Miss Roberts—Miss Pauline Roberts, you know—is giving a dinner party to the little Humboldt girl, who's engaged to be married, and some of the other youngsters of the family—the crowd that came out last winter—"

"If they're out much more than they are now, they'll be naked," said Mrs. Murphy sourly as Lizzie-Kate paused. Clem had reluctantly departed now, with a tentative hint from Ellen that some of them might be walking later on, and stop in at the dance. So Ellen only laughed at her mother and picked up the large, maternal gray cat, to set her yowling and restless upon the table that was set for dinner. "You'd think he had had enough to eat," Mrs. Murphy added, looking darkly at the cat. "Him and his kittens was all peradin' the len'th of the porch whin I stepped out, and they with a rat as big as the kittens itself!"

"Go on!" said Ellen.

"Well, Mrs. Humboldt said that Miss Roberts wanted me just for three days—it seems her regular secretary is ill," resumed Lizzie-Kate briskly. "She's giving this party, and she simply

wants somebody with her, and she'll pay five dollars a day—which is *something*—and she asked herself if you were free. There's nothing to do except talk to caterers' men, I suppose, and the housekeeper, and maybe read to Miss Roberts, and just loaf around a big Long Island place—it's only about twenty-five miles from here—"

"Oh, what did you say?" demanded Ellen eagerly.

"Well, I said that this was your vacation and that I didn't know. But you're to phone tonight, and you can easy enough get out of it by saying that there's been illness in the family—"

Lizzie-Kate was beginning, when Ellen interrupted again. "Get out of it!" she exclaimed. "But why should I? I'm perfectly crazy to see the inside of that house." Ellen's voice faded, her eyes grew awed. "It's a millionaire's Long Island estate, isn't it?" she said in a musing tone. "And it's a party for an engaged girl, isn't it? For heaven's sakes!"

"What difference does that make?" asked Lizzie-Kate.

But Ellen, moving like one in a trance toward the telephone, vouchsafed no reply.

Miss Pauline Roberts was fifty-four, gray, square, and planted among the good things of life as firmly as the Washington Monument. Her life brimmed not only with entirely unearned honors

That Night: The Vanderventer Mansion

and distinctions, with friendships and associations among the always purchasable great, but she had languages, travel, operas, she went from one warm, beautiful environment to another, and wherever she went she was reminded of the matchless superiority of the Roberts name. Wherever she went she ruled and dictated, and others waited for her and upon her. Limousines slinked in her wake like tame lions, jewels came out of their cases and shone like special stars imprisoned for her honor, the world bowed, husky, deferential, awe-stricken, before her.

She was a woman who had shocked her elders years ago with her cocktails and her cigarettes and her frank display of silk stockings. But any girl of seventeen was more daring today than Pauline had been at her worst, and Pauline had retired from the field she could no longer hold; she talked less of her own flirtations, grew somewhat brusque, ruddy and stout, went in for golf and Airedales, and began to like the rôle of fairy godmother to her brothers' children.

The Long Island estate was the famous old Humboldt place, a magnificent brick mansion with tall, narrow windows and towering chimneys a hundred years old. Dark ivy clasped it, and dark great trees encircled it, and the grass that spurted between the blackened bricks of the paths was greenish white until the summer heats withered it, because of the shadows from the low hanging, fan-like branches of the pines.

When Ellen, awed and excited, first saw it, the trees, except the pines, were stripped and bare, and there were pools in the bleak garden, and heaps of matted, discolored leaves, with the wind ruffling them.

Inside was warmth, the smell of coal fires, the purr of radiators, comfort, silence, gloom. The bay windows were made into spacious alcoves by curtains of red; the furniture was dark and heavy, the carpets were dark and heavy, the books, the lamps and tables were all dark and heavy. Fires drowsed decorously behind rods of polished steel, under mantels of black marble; and to the winter green of ferns and delicate begonias in the breakfast room, only an occasional timid shaft of late autumn sunlight penetrated.

The place was full of servants, Ellen noted. They were always coming and going silently, dusting, rearranging, wheeling chairs about, crossing orderly upstairs hallways with armfuls of linen, answering the muted trill of the telephones in low, concerned voices. Elsie Carr, the big Irishwoman who had been Miss Roberts's maid, off and on, for thirty years, would step into her mistress's presence almost before the aristocratic finger tip had left the bell.

Ellen felt a little shy, sitting down with Miss Roberts to a meal that was like a ritual, while Elsie, who was an old friend of the Murphy family, disappeared humbly into the housekeeping regions for her luncheon. She could not understand Elsie's calm indifference to Miss Roberts's grandeur; Ellen found everything she did and said strangely thrilling and significant. She had not been an hour in the house before she passionately envied Elsie her opportunities.

With Ellen the great lady had a pleasantly indifferent yet kindly manner. She tossed off scraps of enlightenment occasionally, occasionally was silent, quite simply silent, as if she were alone, and once showed some little interest in Ellen's account of affairs in the Beatty office—Beatty senior and young John Beatty.

When Ellen smiled confidentially at the butler at luncheon on the first day, shaking her head at the chops, Miss Roberts said indulgently: "Friday—yes, I know. But I didn't know how you

felt about it. I have lots of good friends who are Catholics, and they never bother! Convenient, I call it. I ought to be something—my mother was French, you know, her mother was the Comtesse de Rohan-Ferrier—but I'm too logical. I'm one of the unfortunates who have the facts first—the brain before the heart—so I'll never believe anything, more's the pity! But I have the greatest respect for you. Bring some eggs, Cudworth."

Ellen smiled, but it was a somewhat sickly smile. She felt she ought to say something loyal and illuminating about her faith, but she was still nervous and overawed. The eggs came, marvelous bubbling things in what Ellen mentally characterized as an "Eyetalian dish." "You'd wonder she'd have the dirty looking, red-brown thing it was among all the hand-painted china!" said Ellen later to Lizzie-Kate. She ate her eggs in silence.

After luncheon they looked at the ballroom and went over lists and discussed favors and supper. Ellen worked away busily and nervously, only anxious to be efficient and helpful. Miss Roberts's real object was to have company that she could impress, however, and she took small note of what went on; she was lonely, and glad to have a listener. She idled, talked and smoked, interrupted continually by questions from the staff that was getting everything in readiness for the big dinner.

"There'll be only thirty in all," said Miss Roberts. "It's family, of course—about fifteen of them are youngsters, the rest fathers and mothers and aunts. We're a horrible family, generally speaking, but we do hang together when it comes to a wedding!"

Ellen laughed a dutiful laugh of shocked protest at this, but she felt the laugh to be as insincere as the words. She was altogether too shrewd, this pretty, quiet, bright-eyed little substitute secretary, not to detect the egoist. Miss Roberts's very dispraise of her boasted old line was praise.

Ellen got through the long evening pretty well, with magazines from the library table, and a collection of miniatures to inspect, but the next day she was frightfully bored. She moved through the orderly, gloomy rooms restlessly. She looked at the bay—"a lot of good that done you!" her mother commented later—and she turned the pages of books, and once or twice, in the endless second evening, she put a record on the phonograph, and immortal music punctually poured itself through the room, and was punctually still.

By the third morning, the morning of the dinner, she fairly hated her hostess. She hated her swagger, and her cigarettes, and her arrogance, and her empty boasting; she hated her own automatic murmurs and grins in response. On the second afternoon two ladies in exquisite frocks and hats had called, and there had been smoking, gossip and cocktails, during which Ellen gathered that both visitors were unhappily married. And on the second night Miss Roberts had gone off to have dinner with another unmarried woman, in a similar mansion thirty miles away. But on the third day nothing at all seemed to occur.

The old-fashioned rooms with their black marble mantels and narrow doors were all in scrupulous order at ten o'clock. No doubt preparations were going forward in the housekeeping regions, but Ellen saw and heard, and indeed smelled, nothing of them.

Miss Roberts had good-naturedly asked her to stay and see the party, but a very agony of homesickness seized her at about noon, and she began to long feverishly to return home. If any of the cars was going down to the station, Ellen began to muse anxiously—she wasn't needed now—she could pack in ten seconds—



The women were far more forceful than the men.



"What a gay scene of revelry and sin!" whispered Ellen to Elsie. "Wouldn't you think they'd talk!"

"I think I'll be going home, Miss Roberts," she said, trembling, at luncheon.

"Indeed you won't," said Miss Roberts good-naturedly, reaching with a fine, big hand for a match. "What's the matter? You've helped me charmingly, exactly like Miss Knox, and there's no reason in the world why you shouldn't stay and have a little supper upstairs on a tray and see the fun! Besides, I expect to find you a thousand little jobs this afternoon. I really need you."

Ellen hesitated politely. But within there was no real hesitancy. Every fiber of her being yearned toward home; toward her sister's joyous kitchen, where they would all dine amid much laughter and chatter; toward Clem, and his big arm; toward Alice's party tonight.

However, she was putty in Miss Roberts's masterful hands. The muscles of her body seemed to obey mechanically; she wrote name cards in a very passion of unvoiced protest, she admired the various arrangements—the nicely appointed dressing table where the women would leave their wraps, upstairs, the careful selection of cigars and sweets. And all the while her heart tugged her toward Lizzie-Kate, and her always disconsolate yet always loving mother, and the children with their faded rompers and spattered bowls.

"A place like this cramps my style," mused Ellen darkly, eying the handsome, heavy, old-fashioned furniture of the room wherein she sat. "I'm afraid I'm missing something at home!"

(Continued on page 114)

Concluding Louis Joseph Vance's Mystery Novel

CHAPTER XXII

"TONIGHT'S going to make history," repeated Morphew. "You listen to me . . ."

But Lanyard didn't, he heard only a rumor of words whose sense made no impression upon faculties staggered by a thunderstroke of intelligence. The very elaboration of carelessness with which he named Folly McFee betrayed Morphew's guarded secret: brute jealousy was the fundamental cause of the hatred in which he held Lanyard, the blind, insensate jealousy of an aging man who foresees the failure of his struggle to find in love of women fuel for waning fires.

Sensitive as he must have been, to the aversion which his caresses could not but excite, to her instinctive shrinking from even the greed of his regard, and conceiving her to entertain a tenderness for the more personable man, the more dashing figure clothed in the glamour of a wildly romantic history, and most intolerably his junior by many years, Morphew—the conjecture gained the force of verified conviction in the light of this late disclosure—had decided upon Lanyard's death as the one sure means of healing Folly of her infatuation, and had decreed that it should be brought to pass as an act of justice, approved by custom and the law, meted out to Lanyard while he was engaged in the commission of a felony.

Thus at a stroke he would rid himself of one whom he hated and feared as a rival in love and an irreconcilable menace to his more material fortunes, prove to Folly she had misplaced her admiration, and clear Hugh Morphew of all suspicion of complicity in that old offense of Mallison and the emeralds; he would even rehabilitate Mallison, if he had any further use for that one, if his indignation on account of Mallison's imputed ingratitude had not been all a blind.

And indeed it was not hard to see how well it would be for all concerned, it might be even for Lanyard himself—it might be even for Eve!—if he were to be found dead next morning of a bullet fired by an honest man in defense of his home . . .

Well for Eve and well for himself if he should meet his end tonight! That thought hummed in Lanyard's head like the refrain of some old song that, once recalled, sings itself endlessly over and over to memory's ear. It intensified the sobriety with which he listened while Morphew laid bare the cheap



A gleam of grim joy on his features, Lanyard covered in a leap half the distance between them.

articulation of his plot, but it was permitted to work no deeper treason; so that Lanyard might very well have been as he seemed, as Pagan and Morphew believed him to be, impressed to admiration by the finely dovetailed ingenuity and the imaginative daring of the scheme complete.

"The next property to the west"—Morphew flirted an iridescent paw toward that quarter—"is the summer home of the Vandergrifts. Guess you must know who they are . . ."

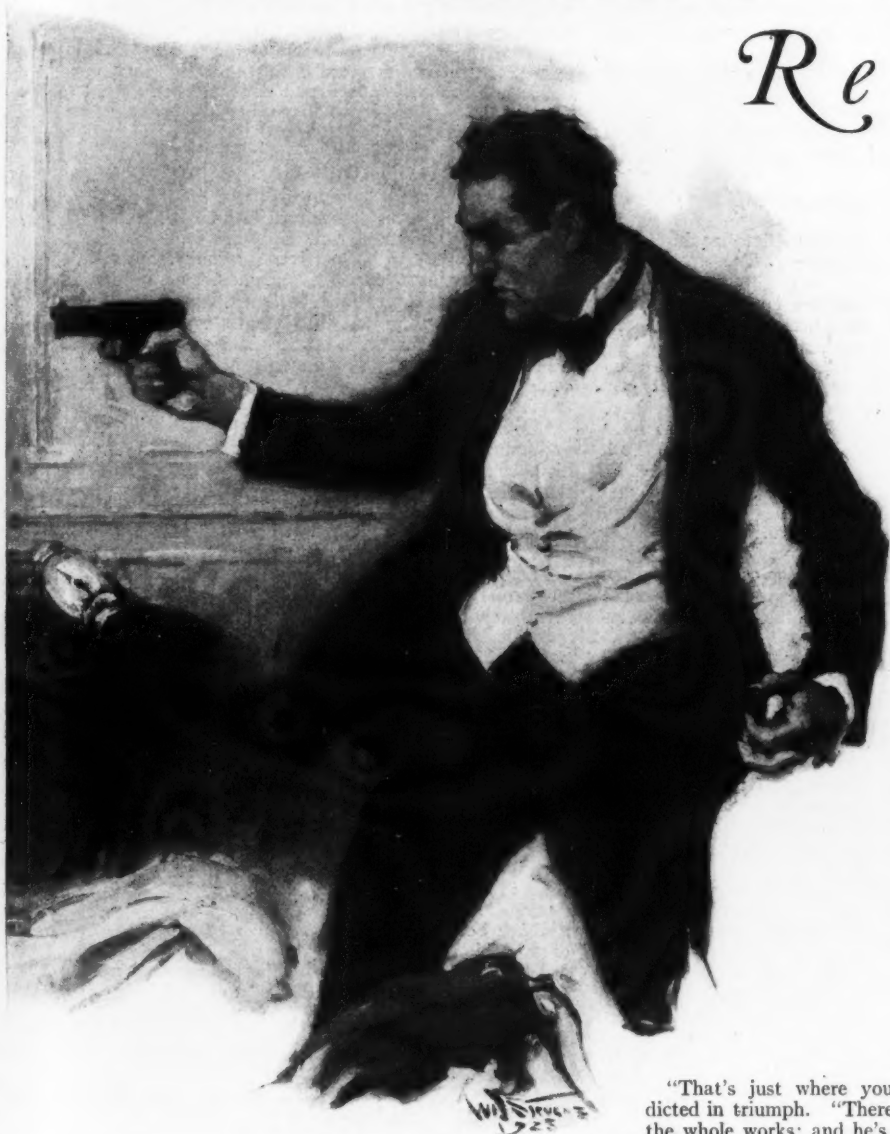
"As well as you know the name of Rothschild, Monsieur."

"The whole family's there just at present: pa and ma Vandergrift—she's sporting most of the Russian crown jewels since the last strike tacked a few dollars per ton on to the cost of coal; the Duchess of Allborough, Theodosia Vandergrift that was, wearing the Allborough diamonds and pearls; Dudley Vandergrift and his wife—her father was Jules Cottier, of the French jewelers, Cottiers'—"

"But assume the Lone Wolf to be acquainted with the fame of Cottiers', Monsieur!"

"And a whole houseful of guests—you know the sort. Nobody worth less than eighteen millions is ever invited to one of the Vandergrift house parties, not because ordinary millionaires are not good enough, but because they'd feel like poor boys at a husking. At a conservative figure there must be upwards of

The Lone Wolf Returns



Illustrations by
W. D. Stevens

full notes on the habits of the household—everything but the combination of the safe."

"We left that out on purpose, Lanyard," Pagan smirked across the cloth, "just to make it interesting for you."

Impatiently Morpew thrust the diagrams and notes into Lanyard's hands. "Everything else you want to know is there. Give it all the once over as soon as you can—we haven't got time now, we ought to be joining the ladies before long—and any questions you want to ask I'll try to answer."

"Many thanks," Lanyard shuffled the papers under a thoughtful frown. "There is only one question I need ask: These fabulously wealthy folk no doubt maintain a corps of night watchmen?"

"That's just where you're wrong," Morpew contradicted in triumph. "There's only one night watchman for the whole works; and he's held the job twenty years and grown so old and confident—nothing having ever happened to make him earn his pay—he spends most of his time on duty asleep in a chair by the garage door. He's supposed to make his rounds every hour, but I've fixed it so he'll forget about the three o'clock trip this night anyway."

"You have fixed it?"

"Don't suppose I'm taking any chances of his having a spell of sleeplessness tonight, do you? When he goes to sit down in his favorite chair this time he's going to find a flask that's slipped by accidental purpose off somebody's hip, a flask more than half full of prime stuff."

"Why not quite full, Monsieur?"

Morpew winked hideously and laid a finger to his nose. "If that bird sees somebody's had a few pulls at it, he won't worry about whether it's prune juice or ill-natured alcohol."

"Forgive my stupidity; now I understand—the cunning hand of Monsieur Pagan will have been at work upon the contents of that flask. How far-sighted you are to keep a tame chemist! But how will the bottle find its way to the seat of the chair?"

"One of my boys will take care of that, of course."

"You have spies within the gates, then?"

"Haven't I just been telling you I never leave anything to chance?"

a million in jewels under that roof tonight that belongs to the Vandergrift clan alone. They take good care of it, too. Their guests can do as they please about their stuff, but all of the Vandergrifts' goes into the big safe in the library at night. It was built into the walls when the house was put up, in eighteen eighty-five or thereabouts; that's a good enough line on the type of box you've got to tackle, for a man that knows all you do about safe construction."

"It does not sound formidable, assuming your information is accurate."

"It's accurate, all right; don't let that worry cramp your style. I've been buying up inside dope on this proposition for months, getting it all set for you—had it all but ready to slip you when Liane and you kicked over the traces last spring. Well—we'd have had to wait awhile anyway for ma and pa Vandergrift to move to the country and now it's a bigger thing than it would have been any time sooner. So no harm done."

"And this information you have collected?"

"Got it right here." Morpew worried a gold-mounted wallet out of one of his hip pockets and sorted from its contents several sheets of onionskin tissue dark with minute pen work. "There you are: map of the grounds, plan of the house, diagram of the library showing locations of all lights and switches,

"But I should say you leave everything to nothing else, when you repose your faith in the loyalty of human hearts. Trust one man with your life, and you forfeit all your right to sleep; trust two, and you may count yourself already betrayed. Trust nobody; it is the rule that made the Lone Wolf what he was."

"But you're trusting me—"

"Pardon, Monsieur," Lanyard smiled; "but—you will admit—under duress."

"Well! but I'm trusting you—"

"With a cordon of Lord knows how many spies posted about the Vandergrift residence, beyond doubt, to see that I am not interfered with while at work."

"But that's only a common sense precaution," Morpew uneasily growled.

"And likewise to see that I do not take it into my head to—how do you say it? double-cross you?—pocket my plunder and neglect to return."

"Nothing like that," Morpew contended with contempt for the suggestion. "Got too much confidence in your good sense."

"And yet you tell me you leave nothing to chance!"

"You're a great little kiddier, all right." A sour smile commented on the concession. "As far as that goes, I don't expect you back here tonight."

"No?" Lanyard queried in surprise. "You mean to be a consistent gambler, then—trust me to return to New York with my loot alone?"

"Not exactly. You'll need a good car for your getaway, and a racing driver that knows all the back roads—"

"Ah! not such a besotted gambler after all!"

"I've marked a place on the map I gave you, a place just outside the grounds where you'll find a racing car waiting, when you're ready. Once you're in that, and the driver steps on the gas, nothing but an airplane stands a ghost of a show of overtaking you."

"Truly, you have thought of everything . . ."

"I'm that way."

There was a lull. Lanyard folded the sheaf of papers with an abstracted air and placed them in his pocket, then became amiably aware that both Morpew and Pagan were watching his every action with the eagerest interest.

"*Eh, bien, Messieurs.* Shall we, as you say, rejoin the ladies?"

"You?"—Morpew abandoned all effort to disguise the strain upon his self-control—"you're going to go through with it?"

Lanyard's shoulders were more expressive even than the spoken retort: "What else has one to do?"

Sitting back Morpew absently mopped his face with a napkin. "It's one hot night," he muttered. "That's all right, then. You're such a fire-eater I didn't know but you might try to buck on me at the last minute."

"Tranquelize yourself, Monsieur. My word has been passed. There is but one thing I cannot promise: I may not be able to make the clean sweep of the jewels that you desire."

"What's to stop you, once you get set at that safe?"

"Who knows, Monsieur?" Lanyard pushed back his chair. "The element of chance enters into every human affair. Who knows whose hands will cast the dice tonight? Who knows how they will fall?"

To himself he added a cry of despair: "Mother of God! who cares?"

CHAPTER XXIII

THE earlier hours of that night aged without departure from its program according to Morpew. With entire apathy Lanyard made himself flexible to every maneuver which that one or Pagan recommended in bogus anxiety "to armor-plate his alibi"—Pagan's phrase, meaning so to color appearances in advance that nobody would have any excuses for believing Lanyard had not been far from the theater of the contemplated crime at the hour of its commission. Unshaken assurance that the intrigue had a single object, his permanent removal from Morpew's path at the smallest cost in embarrassment to Morpew, prevented his lending himself to the artful but meaningless dodges they proposed with anything but the compliance of complete fatigue. It couldn't matter to him what people might think and say of him after that event to whose occurrence he was looking forward with a resignation that, alone of all its preliminary business, afforded him a certain thrill of interest; he wondered a little at the manifestation of such indifference to life in one who had always ere now loved life so well . . .

The sequelae of that mental illness which had blotted seven months out of memory no doubt had something to do with the

psychic background of the strange frame of mind in which he found himself. Impossible to surmise how much or how little, lacking as he did the true data of that eclipse, having to guide speculation only Liane's account and Morpew's, each fragmentary and replete with inherent discrepancies as well as in conflict with the other on points of the first importance. And even given a faithful record of all those days and nights when the Lone Wolf had walked and the mind of Michael Lanyard had been dark, still it would need a psychoanalyst to say in what manner and to what degree the after-effects of such an experience might influence the mental processes of today.

Not that it mattered now, not that Lanyard really cared; for him it sufficed to have in his heart tonight this living pain of longing for a love forever forfeit through no conscious error or omission, through no volition of his own.

Eight months ago he had reconciled himself to the thought of renouncing his love that Eve might not be brought to repent her response, that her faith in him might endure. But since blind fate had conspired with human malice to uproot faith, stamp it out in that kind bosom and destroy it altogether, life held for him no more promise to make it worth the living, he could look back into the very face of death and know never a tremor of dismay. As even now . . .

It was quite true, he was not afraid. He searched his heart and found it steadfast, was confident it would not fail him when his hour struck. He was willing enough to go, only stipulating that when he went he would not go alone, Morpew must go with him. Upon this he was determined, and with so passionate a fixity of purpose that he wondered how Morpew could be in his company and remain insensible to what was in his mind.

They sat together, otherwise alone, long after midnight, in a sector of the veranda as dark as the house behind it. In the entrance hall a night light burned, throwing its dim fan of rays down the steps to the porte-cochère. Liane and Folly had some time since gone to bed, leaving Lanyard to enjoy a "conference" with Morpew of the latter's allegation, before leaving to return to town in the car that had fetched him. The servants, too, were all presumably abed, since Morpew had faithfully acted out the farce, for the benefit of Lanyard, of telling the butler not to wait up and promising to close up the front part of the house in person.

Not long after, the landaulet had ground its tires upon the gravel of the drive, had stopped beneath the porte-cochère long enough to permit Pagan and Morpew to speed an imaginary parting guest with farewells loud and clear, then had crunched noisily away with Pagan as its passenger, understudying Lanyard, to be set down outside the gates ere the car proceeded for New York; while Lanyard and Morpew had settled down to await his furtive return afoot.

A lengthy period of what would have been quiet had Morpew not been, as usual, masticating an unlighted cigar, ended in a snort of complacency: "Well! guess we're all set . . ."

"Not altogether."

"What's the matter? Haven't you had chance enough to study those diagrams?"

"I know them by heart. Nevertheless, you have forgotten one essential of my equipment."

"What's that? A jimmy?"

"I seldom use one, shall have no use for one tonight certainly."

"Don't see how you expect to get into the library without something of the sort."

"O you of little faith!" Lanyard laughed softly. "That is a matter for my skill."

"Well—maybe you do know your business best. But considering you don't use tools or soup on a safe, I'm hanged if I see what else it can be you miss."

"A pistol, Monsieur."

Distaste for the suggestion was evidenced by a delay which prefaced the response: "Thought you didn't go in for that sort of thing."

"What sort of thing?"

"Toting a gun on a job. Thought it was against your principles to be fixed to shed blood if you got in a jam."

"It was. It was likewise contrary to the code of the Lone Wolf to work with accomplices. You have prescribed a new technic for me altogether; you can hardly object if I consent to adopt it only upon provisions which seem to me wise. After all, it is my liberty that is involved—very possibly my life, too."

"All rot. There isn't the slightest danger to you on this job; everything like that has been looked out for."

"You feel sure, Monsieur?"

"Positive."



A vision of elfin fantasy, Folly airily sauntered in, reviewing the tableau with glances of mischievous amusement.

After a pause Lanyard asked: "Tell me, Monsieur—have you noticed that, since we have been sitting here, a man has stolen behind that clump of shrubbery and is keeping watch on us?"

"What's that?" The legs of Morpheus's chair grated harshly on the flooring. "What man? Where?"

"You didn't see him as he came skulking across the lawns?"

"No—"

"Then you are not in a position to assert the fellow is not where I have indicated?"

"No—but see here—"

"Be at ease—there is nobody." Lanyard laughed quietly. "But neither am I in a position to assert—and stake my life upon it—that I will find nobody on guard in the Vandergrift library tonight. So I will have a pistol for self-protection when I go to pay my call."

"You make that a positive condition?"

"But assuredly, Monsieur. If it comes to that—why not?"

"Suppose you'll have to have it, then."

"A supposition that does great credit to your efficiency of apprehension, Monsieur. If, however, you are afraid to trust me with firearms, I will cheerfully consent to a postponement till you have had time to think the matter over."

"Why should I be afraid to trust you with a gat?"

"The very question I have been asking myself. Believe me, Monsieur, confidence alone can beget confidence."

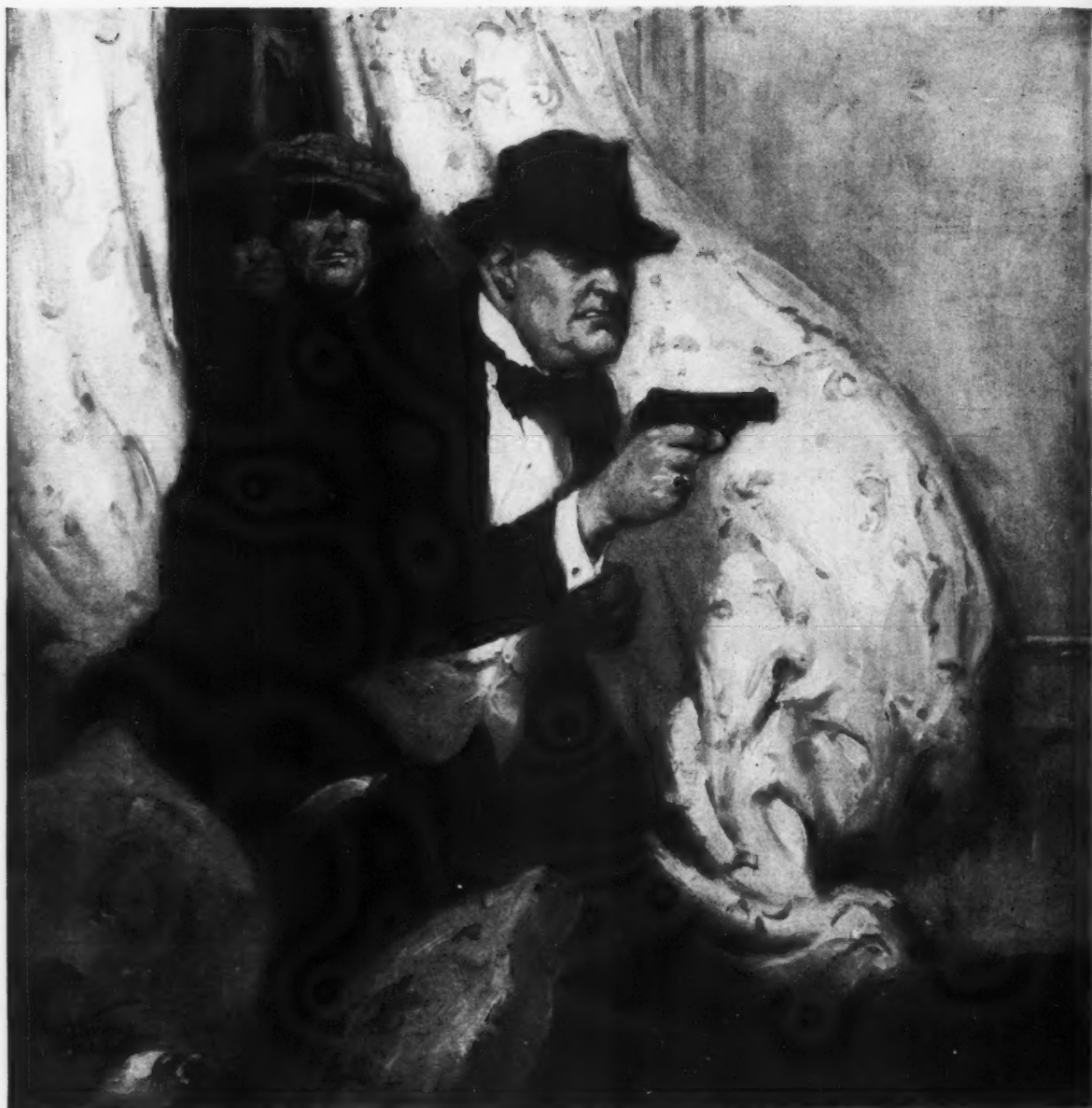
"You've got me all wrong," Morpheus sulkily insisted. "Oh, well! if you've got to have the thing—here."

An automatic pistol changed hands. Making sure that the safety catch was set—proof that the weapon was loaded and ready for use—Lanyard contentedly dropped it into his pocket.

His first small success to break that tedious tale of reverses.

"At last," he announced, "the faithful Pagan."

"Where?" Morpheus goggled blindly at the gloom that clothed the grounds. "I don't see him . . ."



"If your sight by night is no better than that," Lanyard observed, "I feel sure, for the first time, it wasn't you who played Lone Wolf while my back was turned."

Morpheus swung toward him sharply—and cursed himself sotto voce for the constructive self-betrayal.

"What put that silly fool idea into your head?"

"Don't be angry, Monsieur—it was not said seriously."

A shadow picked out with the white wedge of a shirt bosom sped lightly across the gravel and up the steps. Morpheus's cluck brought it fawning to his side.

"You shouldn't risk leaving our good friend alone so long," Lanyard greeted him. "He's too trustful, people take advantage of his confidence in human nature and overreach him. Regard that even I have been able to wheedle a pistol out of him while you were playing chuckfarthing on the tombstones—or whatever the mischief was you've been up to."

"Is that right? What the——"

"Calm yourself, good Pagan. If your terrors were not baseless, I would be making good use of the weapon this instant—if I had waited so long—instead of sitting here and playing the deuce with your nerves."

"Cut it out, can't you?" Morpheus muttered. "This is no time to be squabbling like a couple of kids. You need every minute you've got to run over your plans——"

"Quite unnecessary Monsieur; my mind is already made up."

"All the same, it's better we should leave you——"

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"I shall miss you like fun."

"Besides, it's only half an hour more now; and Pete and I want to be in bed and sound asleep by the time you go into action. Anything more you want to take up with me?"

"At this moment, Monsieur—nothing."

"Then we'll be going." Morpheus heaved out of his chair.

"Good night," he mumbled in heavy effort to sound well disposed. "Don't let 'em put anything over—watch your step."

"I shall not fail to do so." Lanyard was so occupied with cigarette case and matches that he didn't see the hand which Morpheus half heartedly offered and with ill disguised relief withdrew. "And you, too, Monsieur—dream sweetly and—but surely there must be some appropriate American expression?—don't fall out of bed!"

Pagan offered slightly curdled noises of valediction. Lanyard accepted them for what they were worth and dismissed their maker with the same gesture. Like lion and jackal the two familiars went into the house.

The front doors were closed and bolted, the shine of their fanlight became more dull, the stairs complained of a weighty and deliberate tread, windows in the second story burned brightly for several minutes, then were darkened, Lanyard imagined that he heard a creak—Morpheus's bed, or some door resenting an attempt to open it by stealth?—and heard nothing more from the interior of the house.

There was no real stillness where he sat, on the edge of the



"Stick 'em up, my man,
and be quick about it,"
the Sultan of Loot com-
manded Lanyard.

open night. A wind soft and warm was blowing, gravid with presentiments of rain; occasional gusts of sterner stuff wrung eolian roars from tormented tree tops, sharpened the rattle of leaves incessantly a-shiver, and sent strange, shapeless shadows scurrying across the lawns. The moon had set, the stars were few and far and faint, vast convoys of cloud cruising beneath them drenched the world with Cimmerian mirk for minutes at a time; a night made for sinners and spies . . .

He knew very well he was spied upon even then, while he sat small and still, his cigarette burning itself out a dozen feet away on the drive, the phosphorescent dial of his watch in the close cup of his palm. A quarter to three—five minutes more . . . He had told Morphew the truth about the man whom he had seen steal up to stand watch on them—more accurately, on Lanyard—from the cover of a mass of shrubbery; had lied in denying the discovery; both for sheer mischievous enjoyment of Morphew's loss of countenance when he saw the whole tissue of his scheme imperiled by the mischance, as he reckoned it, of a botched job of surveillance.

Taking fright of what he had overheard Lanyard say, likely enough, that spy had taken early occasion to seek a safer hiding place. But nothing persuaded Lanyard that he had marked down the only man assigned to the duty of seeing that he performed in faithful accord with his commitments.

It was, however, in his mind to give them something less elusive than *his* shadow to prove their skill with . . .

At ten minutes to three he pocketed his watch, opened the large blade of the penknife that had thoughtfully been provided him, and inched forward in his chair, eyes to the sky. And when the next great continent of cloud had blocked out the stars for a space and passed, Lanyard's place was vacant; and he, standing on the inside of the French window through which he had in effect dissolved, without causing a sound more than the thin click of a latch pried back by the knife blade, would have risked a good wager that nobody had seen him leave his chair.

He stood in the drawing room, with every faculty at concert pitch, for more than a minute. But nothing stirred in the entrance hall, so far as it was disclosed by a wide, arched doorway, and he heard no sound from upstairs. He passed on to the butler's pantry and there hit upon the service stairway.

Delivered by this route into the hallway of the second story, and guided by prior acquaintance with the location of Morphew's bedchamber, Lanyard paused outside its door to unlatch the safety device on his pistol, then in what was equivalent to a single supple movement let himself into the room.

But the pistol, trained upon the bed the moment his shoulders felt the door behind them, fell immediately to his side; eyes that had faithfully guided the errant footsteps of the Lone Wolf through many a blacker night needed no light to assure them that the room was untenanted.

He reminded himself that Morphew's bedchamber was linked with Pagan's by way of an intervening dressing room, and found

the communicating doors not locked. But Pagan too, it appeared, had been perfidiously remiss in the matter of going to bed. Neither could Lanyard see anything to prove that either man had changed a garment.

In that first dash of disappointment Lanyard was tempted to believe that Morpew's bag of tricks boasted as deep a bottom as his own. He was criminally spendthrift with his time, however, every second that he delayed there, scolding himself for his want of prevision, his idiocy in trusting the pair of them an inch out of his sight.

He returned the way he had come, opened the door of Morpew's room, slipped out with all haste compatible with prudence—and found his retreat cut off.

In night dress and negligé Folly McFee stood between him and the head of the main staircase, which he would have to pass to regain the service stairs. The hallway was without light other than leakage from the entrance hall by way of the staircase well, but seemingly enough for Folly notwithstanding, since she betrayed neither dread of the marauder nor doubt of his identity, nor yet any astonishment to see him there who should have been twenty miles away.

In accents circumspect but crisp and even she demanded: "What are you doing there?"

With a shrug Lanyard put away his pistol. He had been wretchedly premature, he perceived, when, having bluffed Morpew into giving him that weapon, he had congratulated himself on the turn it signalized in his luck.

"Dropping in on your dear betrothed," he replied, "just by way of giving him a glad surprise."

She had no patience for such ill timed levity. "What do you mean? What did you want with Morpew?"

"If you must know, I meant to invite him to take a walk with me."

"At the pistol's point!"

"Precisely."

"Well!"—a note of scorn sounded in her voice, or Lanyard was deceived—"why didn't you? Wouldn't he go?"

"I regret to report that the gentleman is not at home."

"Not——" Acute dismay drove the woman back to the rail round the well. A hand flew to her lips. "Morpew isn't in his room?"

"Neither is Pagan. I'm afraid they are up to some sort of naughtiness."

"For Heaven's sake! don't joke." Folly flew back to him, laid hold of his arm with hands of almost savage entreaty. "Don't you see your danger? Don't you know what they intend?"

"Too well. That's why I wanted Morpew's company on my walk—not the best life insurance one could wish, but better than none."

"Ah! but why?"—now the woman was almost sobbing—"why didn't you run for it while you had a chance?"

"For the best of all reasons—I hadn't the chance."

"But they left you alone down there on the veranda——"

"Half a minute." Lanyard firmly freed his arm and caught her wrists instead, applying sufficient pressure to command attention. "You knew that much, knew I hadn't gone off in that car——"

"Of course."

"How much more do you know?"

"There isn't time to tell you. Be content that I know everything——"

"Why he brought me here tonight?" She nodded. "What he's forced me to promise I'd do?"

"Everything, I tell you!"

"In the name of wonder! how?"

She gave no answer. The quiet of the hour took up their hurried, low-pitched murmurs as blotting paper takes up ink. They stood without moving, close together, like lovers. He was aware of the hastened movement of her bosom, and though the glow from below was too feeble to read her face by, fancied that her eyes were lowering.

"Tell me how you know . . ."

"Please! you hurt." She made him loose her wrists, yet did not move beyond his reach. "Enough that I do know," her whisper insisted. "My name may be Folly, but I'll prove to you yet I'm far from a fool."

"You claim that," Lanyard retorted, "yet you're going to marry Morpew——"

"And you believe it!" She laughed bitterly. "Now you tell me, which of us is the fool?"

"It was you who informed me. How do I know what or what not to believe? I'm like a man newly blinded, hoping against hope to find a friend's hand——"

"Here . . ."

Lanyard set his lips to the hand Folly flung him, and retained it folded between his own.

"Then tell me——"

"I can't, there's no time. You must go—go at once—to save yourself, before they can come back and catch you here."

"Not a step till I know."

"Oh, you will drive me mad!"

Amazingly, on top of that, the slender body shook with guarded laughter. "Very well, then! I'll tell you—but on two conditions: You must promise to go immediately after, and not to let Morpew suspect. I want to be the first to tell him, and see his face when he learns . . . I've had dictographs wired in all through the house!"

"But—good Lord!—for what purpose?"

"You are so stupid! Why do you think I care whether you go or stay? Why do you suppose I ever let them think they'd got round me again? Only because I wanted to help . . ."

"For my sake!"

"You're not really stupid, you know. You've known all along. Now keep your promise and go. Give me a ring in the morning. I'll tell you what has happened."

"What has happened?" On the point of taking her at her word, Lanyard checked in suspicion. "What can happen, if I let him down?"

"You don't think that would stop him? You don't know that monster. I heard him tell Pagan, if you should fail him tonight or succeed in escaping, there would be a robbery just the same, and

of course you'd get all the credit."

"You were right. There's no time to waste."

Too late the young woman saw her error and sought to detain him by putting herself in his path. "What are you going to do?"

"Bid you good night."

Lanyard's hands clipped her elbows to her sides and lifted her bodily till her face was level with his own. Soundly if hastily kissed, she was set to one side, and when she recovered was alone.

CHAPTER XXIV

A WILDER spirit now ruled the night; the freshening wind blew with zest more constant, with briefer and less frequent lulls, the trees it worried fought back in bootless fury, with thrashing limbs and lows of torment, a heavier wrack coursed the skies, the blinded stars found fewer rifts through which to wash the world with their troubled and (Continued on page 136)

YOU may remember that some time ago I culled from a Los Angeles paper an advertisement which read something as follows:

Mrs. J. J. Moskowitz of 9964 South Kingsley Drive wishes to thank Dr. H. Rabiner, the nurses and staff of the Northlake Hospital, and all who so kindly assisted in the death of her late husband, Max J. Moskowitz, deceased.

During the month of May, which is sometimes called merry by the thoughtless, I found myself so nearly in the same situation as the late Max that I sympathize most heartily with him. I would like, of course, to give you the shocking details of the entire affair, but as many of my professional associates, if I so much as mention the word *operation* in print, have threatened to take the matter up with the grievance committee of the Authors' League of America, I can only impart the meager information that I have lost over thirty pounds in weight and gained on my person a profile map of the Coast Range between San Bernardino and Tujunga, including all canyons.

Like Mrs. Moskowitz, I wish to take this opportunity of thanking the hotel doctor who rubbed me with mustard oil when he ought to have packed me with ice bags, the man who got away with my best cuff links in the confusion, and lastly the person who by years of overeating and under-exercising so efficiently assisted in his own illness.

MONTAGUE GLASS

It is because of this illness that Mr. Glass didn't have any Department in this issue, but while he was lying in bed he got a couple of good ones that made him laugh so hard he almost pulled out the stitches.

THE EDITOR.

By P. G. WODEHOUSE

The Genial Genius of London

Ukridge Sees Her Through

Illustrations by T. D. Skidmore

THE girl from the typewriting and stenographic bureau had a quiet but speaking eye. At first it had registered nothing but enthusiasm and the desire to please. But now, rising from that formidable notebook, it met mine with a look of exasperated bewilderment. There was an expression of strained sweetness on her face, as of a good woman unjustly put upon. I could read what was in her mind as clearly as if she had been impolite enough to shout it. She thought me a fool. And as this made the thing unanimous, for I had been feeling exactly the same myself for the last quarter of an hour, I decided that the painful exhibition must now terminate.

It was Ukridge who had let me in for the thing. He had fired my imagination with tales of authors who were able to turn out five thousand words a day by dictating their stuff to a stenographer instead of writing it; and though I felt at the time that he was merely trying to drum up trade for the typewriting bureau in which his young friend Dora Mason was now partner, the lure of the idea had gripped me. Like all writers, I had a sturdy distaste for solid work, and this seemed to offer a pleasant way out, turning literary composition into a jolly *l'le-à-l'le* chat. It was only when those gleaming eyes looked eagerly into mine and that twitching pencil poised itself to record the lightest of my golden thoughts that I discovered what I was up against. For fifteen minutes I had been experiencing all the complex emotions of a nervous man who, suddenly called upon to make a public speech, realizes too late that his brain has been withdrawn and replaced by a cheap cauliflower substitute; and I was through.

"I'm sorry," I said, "but I'm afraid it's not much use going on. I don't seem able to manage it."

Now that I had come frankly out into the open and admitted my idiocy, the girl's expression softened. She closed her notebook forgivingly.

"Lots of people can't," she said. "It's just a knack."

"Everything seems to go out of my head."

"I've often thought it must be very difficult to dictate."

Two minds with but a single thought, in fact. Her sweet reasonableness, combined with the relief that the thing was over, induced in me a desire to babble. One has the same feeling when the dentist lets one out of his chair.

"You're from the Norfolk Street Agency, aren't you?" I said. A silly question, seeing that I had expressly rung them up on the telephone and asked them to send somebody round; but I was still feeling the effects of the ether.

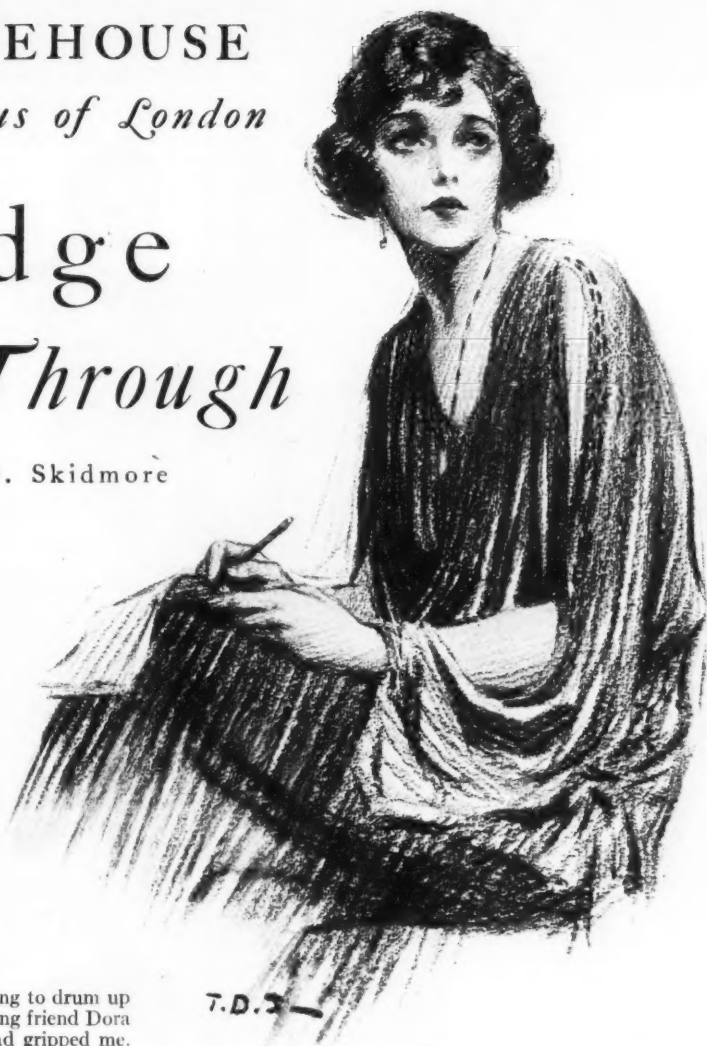
"Yes."

"That's in Norfolk Street, isn't it? I mean," I went on hurriedly, "I wonder if you know a Miss Mason there? Miss Dora Mason?"

She seemed surprised.

"My name is Dora Mason," she said.

I was surprised, too. I had not supposed that partners in typewriting businesses stooped to going out on these errands. And



I could read what was in the girl's mind. She thought me a fool.

I was conscious of a return of my former embarrassment, feeling—quite unreasonably, for I had seen her only once in my life and then from a distance—that I ought to have remembered her.

"We were short-handed at the office," she explained, "so I came along. But how do you know my name?"

"I am a great friend of Ukridge's."

"Why, of course! I was wondering why your name was so familiar. I've heard him talk so much about you."

And after that we really did settle down to the cozy *l'le-à-l'le* of which I had had visions. She was a nice girl, the only noticeable flaw in her character being an absurd respect for Ukridge's intelligence and abilities. I, who had known that foe of the human race from boyhood up and was still writhing beneath the memory of the night when he had sneaked my dress clothes, could have corrected her estimate of him, but it seemed unkind to shatter her girlish dreams.

"He was wonderful about this typewriting business," she said. "It was such a splendid opportunity, and but for Mr. Ukridge I should have had to let it slip. You see, they were asking two hundred pounds for the partnership, and I only had a hundred. And Mr. Ukridge insisted on putting up the rest of the money. You see—I don't know if he told you—he thought that he ought to do something because he says he lost me the position I had with his aunt. It wasn't his fault at all, really, but he kept saying that if I hadn't gone to that dance with him I shouldn't have got back late and been dismissed. So . . ."

She was a rapid talker, and it was only now that I was able to comment on the amazing statement which she had made in the opening portion of her speech. So stunning had been the effect of those few words on me that I had hardly heard her subsequent



"When Hank tipped the waiter a five pound note the man burst into tears and kissed him on both cheeks."

remarks. "Did you say that Ukridge insisted on finding the rest?" I gasped.

"Yes. Wasn't it nice of him?"

"He gave you a hundred pounds? Ukridge!"

"Guaranteed it," said Miss Mason. "I arranged to pay a hundred pounds down and the rest in sixty days."

"But suppose the rest is not paid in sixty days?"

"Well, then I'm afraid I should lose my hundred. But it will be, of course. Mr. Ukridge told me to have no anxiety about that at all. Well, good by, Mr. Corcoran, I must be going now. I'm sorry we didn't get better results with the dictating. I should think it must be very difficult to do till you get used to it."

Her cheerful smile as she went out struck me as one of the most pathetic sights I had ever seen. Poor child, bustling off so brightly when her whole future rested on Ukridge's ability to raise a hundred pounds! I presumed that he was relying on one of those Utopian schemes of his which were to bring him in thousands—"at a conservative estimate, laddie!"—and, not for the first time in a friendship of years, the reflection came to me that Ukridge ought to be in some sort of a home. A capital fellow in many respects, but not a man to be allowed at large.

I was pursuing this train of thought when the banging of the front door, followed by a pounding of footsteps on the stairs and a confused noise without, announced his arrival.

"I say, laddie," said Ukridge, entering the room, as was his habit, like a northeasterly gale, "was that Dora Mason I saw going down the street? Has she been here?"

"Yes. I asked her agency to send someone to take dictation, and she came."

Ukridge reached out for the tobacco jar, filled his pipe, replenished his pouch, sank comfortably on to the sofa, adjusted the cushions and bestowed an approving glance upon me.

"Corky, my boy," said Ukridge, "what I like about you and the reason why I always maintain that you will be a great man one of these days is that you have vision. You have the big, broad, flexible outlook. You're not too proud to take advice. I say to you 'Dictate your stuff, it'll pay you,' and damme, you go straight off and do it. No arguing or shilly-shallying. You just go and do it. It's the spirit that wins to success. I like to see it. Dictating will add thousands a year to your income. I say it advisedly, laddie—thousands. And if you continue leading a steady and sober life and save your pennies, you'll be amazed at the way your capital will pile up. Money at five percent compound interest doubles itself every fourteen years. By the time you're forty—"

It seemed churlish to strike a jarring note after all these compliments, but it had to be done nevertheless.

"Never mind about what's going to happen to me when I'm forty," I said. "What I want to know is what is all this I hear about your guaranteeing Miss Mason a hundred quid?"

"Ah, she told you? Yes," said Ukridge airily, "I guaranteed it. Matter of conscience, old son. Man of honor, no alternative. You see, there's no getting away from it, it was my fault that she was sacked by my aunt. Got to see her through, laddie, got to see her through."

I goggled at the man. "Look here," I said, "let's get this thing straight. A couple of days ago you touched me for five shillings and said it would save my life—"

"It did, old man, it did."

"And now you're talking of scattering hundred quids about the place as if you were Rothschild. Do you smoke it or inject it with a hypodermic needle?"

There was pain in Ukridge's eyes as he sat up and gazed at me through the smoke. "I don't like this tone, laddie," he said reproachfully. "Upon my Sam, it wounds me. It sounds as if you had lost faith in me, in my vision—"

"Oh, I know you've got vision. And the big, broad, flexible outlook. Also snap, ginger, enterprise and ears that stick out at right angles like the sails of a windmill. But that doesn't help me in the least to understand where you expect to get a hundred quid."

Ukridge smiled tolerantly. "You don't suppose I would have guaranteed the money for poor little Dora unless I knew where to lay my hands on it, do you? If you ask me, have I got the stuff at this precise moment, I candidly reply, no, I haven't. But it's fluttering on the horizon, laddie, fluttering on the horizon. I can hear the beating of its wings."

"Is Battling Billson going to fight someone and make your fortune again?"

Ukridge winced, and the look of pain flitted across his face once more. "Don't mention that man's name to me, old horse. Every time I think of him everything seems to go all black. No, the thing I have on hand now is a real, solid business proposition. Gilt-edged you might call it. I ran into a bloke the other day whom I used to know out in Canada."

"I didn't know you had ever been in Canada," I interrupted.

"Of course I've been in Canada. Go over there and ask the first fellow you meet if I was ever in Canada. Canada! I should say I had been in Canada. Why, when I left Canada, I was seen off on the steamer by a couple of policemen . . . Well, I ran into this bloke in Piccadilly. He was wandering up and down and looking rather lost. Couldn't make out what the deuce he was doing over here, because, when I knew him, he hadn't a

cent. Well, it seems that he got fed up with Canada and went over to America to try and make his fortune.

"And, by Jove, he did, first crack out of the box. Bought a bit of land about the size of a pocket handkerchief in Texas or Oklahoma or somewhere, and one morning when he was hoeing the soil or planting turnips or something out buzzed a whacking great oil well. Apparently that sort of thing's happening every day out there. If I could get a bit of capital together, I'm dashed if I wouldn't go to Texas myself. Great open spaces where men are men, laddie—suit me down to the ground.

"Well, we got talking, and he said that he intended to settle in England. Came from London as a kid but couldn't stick it at any price now because they had altered it so much. I told him the thing for him to do was to buy a house in the country with a decent bit of shooting, and he said, 'Well, how do you buy a house in the country with a decent bit of shooting?' and I said: 'Leave it entirely in my hands. I'll see you're treated right.'

"So he told me to go ahead and I went to Farmingdons', the house agent blokes in Cavendish Square. Had a chat with the manager. Very decent old bird with moth-eaten whiskers. I said I'd got a millionaire looking for a house in the country. 'Find him one, laddie,' I said, 'and we split the commish.' He said right-o, and any day now I expect to hear that he's dug up something suitable. Well, you can see for yourself what that's going to mean. These house agent fellows take it as a personal affront if a client gets away from them with anything except a collar stud and the clothes he stands up in, and I'm in halves. Reason it out, my boy, reason it out."

"You're sure this man really has money?"

"Crawling with it, laddie. Hasn't found out yet there's anything smaller than a five pound note in circulation. He took me to lunch, and when he tipped the waiter the man burst into tears and kissed him on both cheeks."

I am bound to admit that I felt easier in my mind, for it really did seem as though the fortunes of Miss Mason rested on firm ground. I had never supposed that Ukridge could be associated with so sound a scheme, and I said so. In fact, I rather overdid my approval, for it encouraged him to borrow another five shillings; and before he left we were in treaty over a further deal which was to entail my advancing him half a sovereign in one solid payment. Business breeds business.

For the next ten days I saw nothing of Ukridge. As he was in the habit of making these periodical disappearances, I did not worry unduly as to the whereabouts of my wandering boy, but I was conscious from time to time of a mild wonder as to what had become of him. The mystery was solved one night when I was walking through Pall Mall on my way home after a late session with an actor acquaintance who was going into vaudeville and to whom I hoped—mistakenly, as it turned out—to sell a one-act play.

I say night, but it was nearly two in the morning. The streets were black and deserted, silence was everywhere, and all London slept except Ukridge and a friend of his whom I came upon standing outside Hardy's Fishing Tackle Shop. That is to say, Ukridge was standing outside the shop. His friend was sitting on the pavement with his back against a lamp-post.

So far as I could see in the uncertain light, he was a man of middle age, rugged of aspect and grizzled about

the temples. I was able to inspect his temples because—doubtless from the best motives—he was wearing his hat on his left foot. He was correctly clad in dress clothes, but his appearance was a little marred by a splash of mud across his shirt front and the fact that at some point earlier in the evening he had either thrown away or been deprived of his tie. He gazed fixedly at the hat with a poached egg-like stare. He was the only man I had ever seen who was smoking two cigars at the same time.

Ukridge greeted me with the warmth of a beleaguered garrison welcoming the relieving army.

"My dear old horse! Just the man I wanted!" he cried as if he had picked me out of a number of competing applicants. "You can give me a hand with Hank, laddie."

"Is this Hank?" I inquired, glancing at the recumbent sportsman, who had now closed his eyes as if the spectacle of the hat had begun to pall.

"Yes. Hank Philbrick. This is the bloke I was telling you about, the fellow who wants the house."

"He doesn't seem to want any house. He looks quite satisfied with the great open spaces."

"Poor old Hank's a bit under the weather," explained Ukridge,

regarding his stricken friend with tolerant sympathy. "It takes him this way. The fact is, old man, it's a mistake for these blokes to come into money. They overdo things. The only thing Hank ever got to drink for the first fifty years of his life was water, with buttermilk as a treat on his birthday, and he's trying to make up for lost time. He's only just discovered that there are such things as liqueurs in the world, and he's making them rather a hobby. Says they're such a pretty color. It wouldn't be so bad if he stuck to one at a time, but he likes making experiments. Mixes them, laddie. Orders the whole lot and blends them in a tankard. Well, I mean to say," said Ukridge reasonably, "you can't take more than five or six tankards of mixed benedictine, chartreuse, kummel, crème de menthe and old brandy without feeling the strain a bit. Especially if you stoke up on champagne and Burgundy."

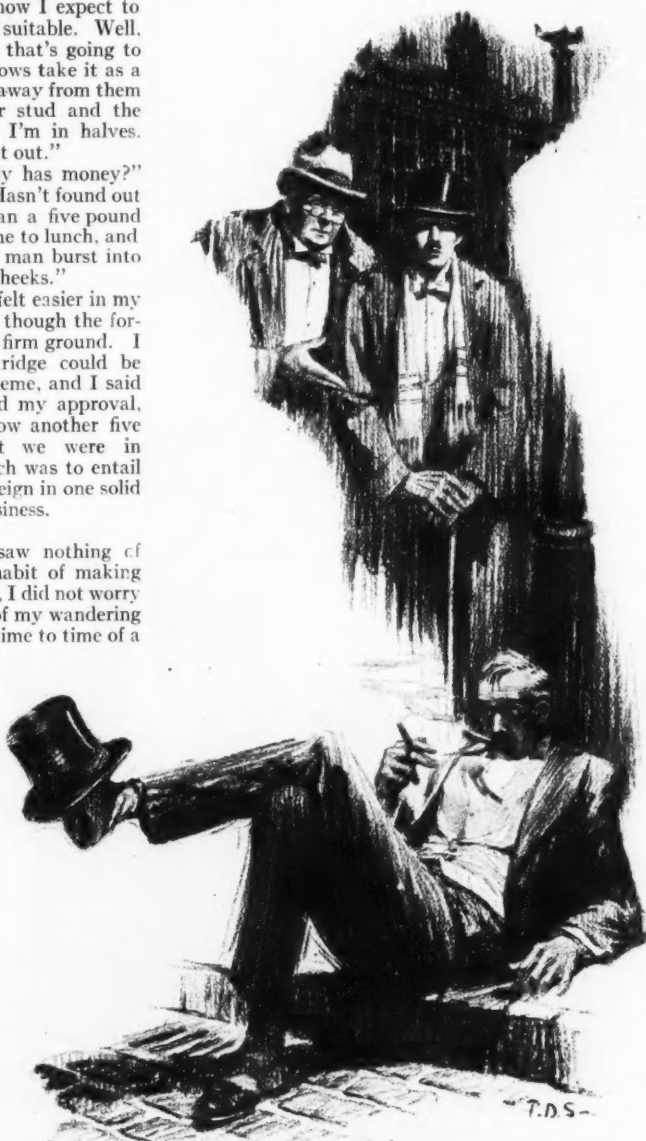
A strong shudder ran through me at the thought. I gazed at the human cellar on the pavement with a feeling bordering on awe.

"Does he really?"

"Every night for the last two weeks. I've been with him most of the time. I'm the only pal he's got in London, and he likes to have me round."

"What plans have you for his future? His immediate future, I mean. Do we remove him somewhere or is he going to spend the night out here under the quiet stars?"

"This is the bloke I was telling you about who wants the house," explained Ukridge. "He looks quite satisfied with the great open spaces," I returned.



Ukridge Sees Her Through

"I thought if you would lend a hand, old man, we could get him to the Carlton. He's staying there."

"He won't be long, if he comes in in this state."

"Bless you, my dear old man, they don't mind. He tipped the night porter twenty quid yesterday and asked me if I thought it was enough. Lend a hand, laddie. Let's go."

I lent a hand, and we went.

The effect which that nocturnal encounter had upon me was to cement the impression that in acting as agent for Mr. Philbrick in the purchase of a house Ukridge was on to a good thing. What little I had seen of Hank had convinced me that he was not the man to be finicky about price. He would pay whatever they asked him without hesitation. Ukridge would undoubtedly make enough out of his share of the commission to pay off Dora Mason's hundred without feeling it. Indeed, for the first time in his life he would probably be in possession of that bit of capital of which he was accustomed to speak so wistfully. I ceased, therefore, to worry about Miss Mason's future and concentrated myself on my own troubles.

They would probably have seemed to anyone else minor troubles, but nevertheless they were big enough to depress me. Two days after my meeting with Ukridge and Mr. Philbrick in Pall Mall I had received rather a disturbing letter.

There was a society paper for which at that time I did occasional work and wished to do more; and the editor had sent me a ticket for the forthcoming dance of the Pen and Ink Club with instructions to let him have a column and a half of bright, descriptive matter. It was only after I had digested the pleasant reflection that here was a bit of badly needed cash dropping on me out of a clear sky that I realized why the words Pen and Ink Club seemed to have a familiar ring. It was the club of which Ukridge's Aunt Julia was the popular and energetic president, and the thought of a second meeting with that uncomfortable woman filled me with a deep gloom. I had not forgotten—and probably would never forget—my encounter with her in her drawing room at Wimbledon.

I was not in a financial position, however, to refuse editors their whims, so the thing had to be gone through; but the prospect damped me, and I was still brooding on it when a violent ring at the front door bell broke in on my meditations. It was followed by the booming of Ukridge's voice inquiring if I were in. A moment later he had burst into the room. His eyes were wild, his pince-nez at an angle of forty-five, and his collar separated from its stud by a gap of several inches. His whole appearance clearly indicated some blow of fate, and I was not surprised when his first words revealed an aching heart.

"Hank Philbrick," said Ukridge without preamble, "is a son of Belial, a leper and a worm."

"What's happened now?"

"He's let me down, the weak-minded Tishbite! Doesn't want that house in the country after all. If Hank Philbrick is the sort of man Canada is producing nowadays, Heaven help the British Empire."

I shelved my petty troubles. They seemed insignificant beside this majestic tragedy. "What made him change his mind?"

"The wobbling, vacillating hound! I always had a feeling that there was something wrong with that man. He had a nasty, shifty eye. You'll bear me out, laddie, in that? Haven't I spoken to you a hundred times about his shifty eye?"

"Certainly. Why did he change his mind?"

"Didn't I always say he wasn't to be trusted?"

"Repeatedly. What made him change his mind?"

Ukridge laughed with a sharp bitterness that nearly cracked the window-pane. His collar leaped like a live thing. Ukridge's collar was always a sort of thermometer that registered the warmth of his feelings. Sometimes, when his temperature was normal, it would remain attached to its stud for minutes at a time; but the slightest touch of fever sent it jumping up, and the more he was moved the higher it jumped.

"When I knew Hank out in Canada," he said, "he had the constitution of an ox. Ostriches took his correspondence course in digestion. But directly he comes into a bit of money . . . Laddie," said Ukridge earnestly, "when I'm a rich man, I want you to stand at my elbow and watch me very carefully. The moment you see signs of degeneration, speak a warning word. Don't let me coddle myself. Don't let me get fussy about my health . . . Where was I? Oh, yes . . . Directly this man comes into a bit of money he gets the idea that he's a sort of fragile, delicate flower—"

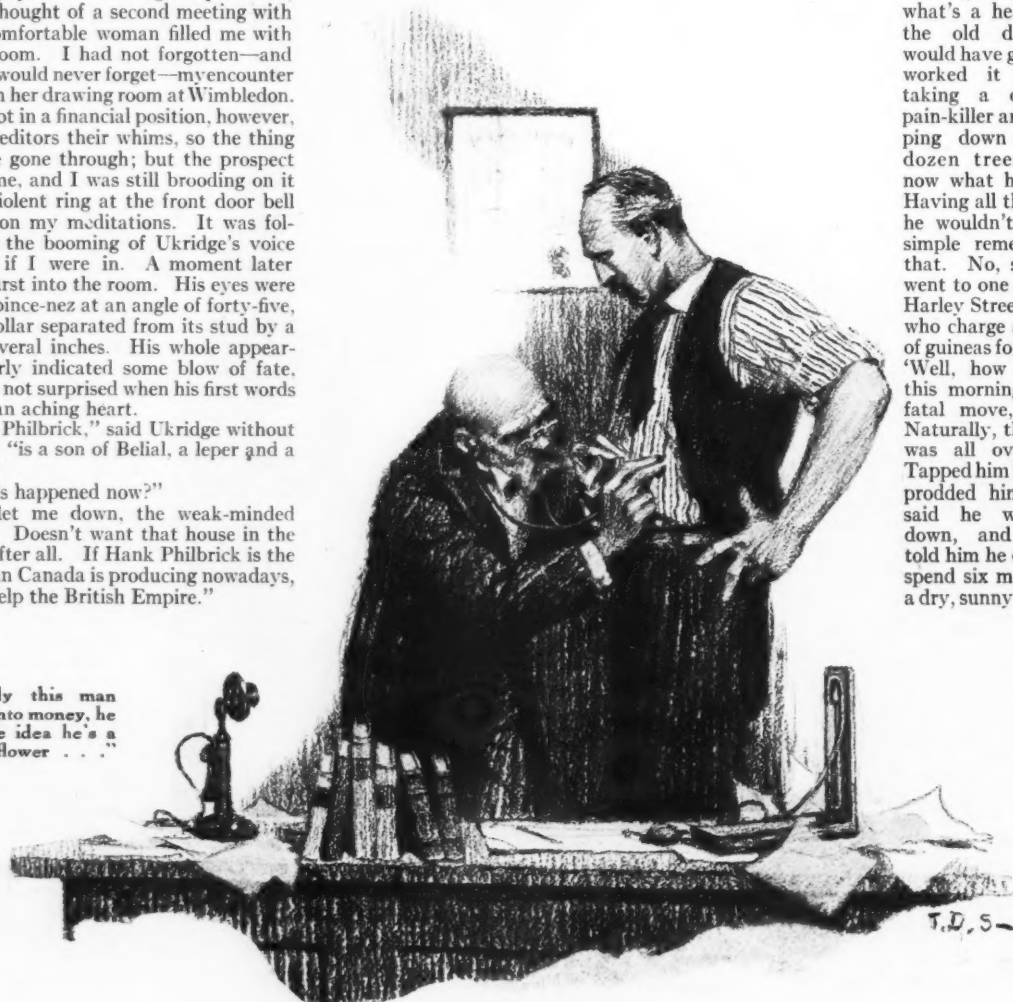
"I shouldn't have thought so from what you were telling me the other night."

"What happened the other night was the cause of all the trouble. Naturally, he woke up with a bit of a head."

"I can quite believe it."

"Yes, but my gosh what's a head? In the old days he would have gone and worked it off by taking a dose of pain-killer and chopping down half a dozen trees. But now what happens? Having all this cash, he wouldn't take a simple remedy like that. No, sir! He went to one of those Harley Street sharks who charge a couple of guineas for saying, 'Well, how are we this morning?' A fatal move, laddie. Naturally, the shark was all over him. Tapped him here and prodded him there, said he was run down, and finally told him he ought to spend six months in a dry, sunny climate."

"Directly this man comes into money, he gets the idea he's a fragile flower . . ."



Recommended Egypt. Egypt, I'll trouble you, for a bloke who lived fifty years thinking that it was a town in Illinois. The long and the short of it is that he's gone off for six months, doesn't want a place in England, and I hope he gets bitten by a crocodile. And the lease all drawn out and ready to sign. Upon my Sam, it's a little hard. Sometimes I wonder whether it's worth while going on struggling."

A silence fell upon us. Utridge, sunk in gloomy reverie, fumbled absently at his collar stud. I smoked with a heavy heart.

"What will your friend Dora do now?"

"That's what's worrying me," said Utridge lugubriously. "I've been trying to think of some other way of raising that hundred, but I don't mind confessing I am baffled, baffled. I can see no daylight."

Nor could I. His chance of raising a hundred pounds by any means short of breaking into the Mint seemed slight indeed.

"Odd, the way things happen," I said. I gave him the editor's letter. "Look at that."

"What's this?"

"He's sending me to do an article on the Pen and Ink Club dance. If only I had never been to see your aunt——"

"And made such a mess of it——"

"I didn't make a mess of it. It just happened that——"

"All right, laddie, all right," said Utridge tonelessly. "Don't let's split straws. The fact remains, whether it was your fault or not, the thing was a complete frost. What were you saying?"

"I was saying that, if only I had never been to your aunt, I could have met her in a perfectly natural way at this dance——"

"Done Young Disciple stuff," said Utridge, seizing on the idea. "Rubbed in the fact that you could do her a bit of good by boosting her in the paper——"

"And asked her to re-engage Miss Mason as her secretary."

Utridge toyed with the letter. "You don't think even now——"

I was sorry for him and sorrier for Dora Mason, but on this point I was firm. "No, I don't."

"But consider, laddie," urged Utridge. "At this dance she may well be in malleable mood. The lights, the music, the laughter, the jollity——"

"No," I said. "It can't be done. I can't back out of going to the affair, because if I did I'd never get any more work to do for this paper. But I'll tell you one thing. I mean to keep quite clear of your aunt. That's final. I dream of her in the night sometimes and wake up screaming. And in any case it wouldn't be any use my tackling her. She wouldn't listen to me. It's too late. You weren't there that afternoon at Wimbledon, but you can take it from me that I'm not one of her circle of friends."

"That's the way it always happens," sighed Utridge. "Everything comes too late. Well, I'll be popping off. Lot of heavy thinking to do, laddie. Lot of heavy thinking."

And he left without borrowing even a cigar, a sure sign that his resilient spirit was crushed beyond recuperation.

The dance of the Pen and Ink Club was held, like so many functions of its kind, at the Lotus Rooms, Knightsbridge, that barrack-like building which seems to exist only for these sad affairs. The Pen and Ink evidently went in for quality in its membership rather than quantity; and the band, when I arrived, was giving out the peculiarly tinny sound which bands always produce in very large rooms that are only one-sixth full. The air was chilly and desolate, and a general melancholy seemed to prevail. The few couples dancing on the broad acres of floor appeared somber and introspective, as if they were meditating on the body upstairs and realizing that all flesh is as grass. Around the room, on those gilt chairs which are seen only in subscription dance halls, weird beings were talking in undertones, probably about the trend of Scandinavian literature. In fact, the only bright spot on the whole gloomy business was that it occurred before the era of tortoise shell-rimmed spectacles.

That curious gray hopelessness which always afflicts me when I am confronted with literary people in the bulk was not lightened by the reflection that at any moment I might encounter Miss Julia Utridge. I moved warily about the room, keenly alert like a cat that has wandered into a strange alley and sees in every shadow the potential hurler of a half brick. I could envisage nothing but awkwardness and embarrassment springing from such a meeting.



The Biggses were loath to war upon women; but if the women asked for it, they could be men of iron.

The lesson which I had drawn from my previous encounter with her was that happiness for me lay in keeping as far away from Miss Julia Utridge as possible.

"Excuse me!"

My precautions had been in vain. She had sneaked up on me from behind. "Good evening," I said.

It is never any good rehearsing these scenes in advance. They always turn out so differently. I had been assuming, when I slunk into this hall, that if I met this woman I should feel the same shrinking sense of guilt and inferiority which had proved so disintegrating at Wimbledon. I had omitted to make allowances for the fact that that painful episode had taken place on her own ground and that from the start my conscience had been far from clear. Tonight conditions were different.

"Are you a member of the Pen and Ink Club?" said Utridge's aunt frostily.

Her stony blue eyes were fixed on me with an expression that was not exactly loathing but rather a cold and critical contempt. So might a fastidious cook look at a black beetle in her kitchen.

"No," I replied, "I am not." I felt bold and hostile. This woman gave me a pain in the neck, and I endeavored to express as much in the language of the eyes.

"Then will you please tell me what you are doing here? This is a private dance."

One has one's moments. I felt much as I presume Battling Billson must have felt in his recent fight with Alf Todd when he perceived his antagonist advancing upon him wide open, inviting the knock-out.

"The editor of Society sent me a ticket. He wanted an article written about it."

If I was feeling like Billson, Utridge's aunt must have felt very like Mr. Todd. I could see that she was shaken. In a flash I had changed from a black beetle to a godlike creature able, if conciliated, to do a bit of that log-rolling which is so dear to the heart of the female novelist. And she had not conciliated me. Of all sad words of tongue or pen, the saddest are these, it might have been. It is too much to say that her jaw fell, but certainly the agony of this black moment caused her lips to part in a sort of twisted

(Continued on page 132)

By Berton Braley

Illustrations by John Richard Flanagan

"**O**hayo! Ohayo!"
It would be absurd

To send any travelogue out of Japan
Which didn't begin with that Japanese word:



And so I conform to the usual plan
And start with "Ohayo"—in English, "Good morning"—
For otherwise people would frankly be scorning
Whatever I said. They would snicker: "Go on!
That bird never even set eyes on Nippon!
His stuff ain't authentic; it's open to doubt.
How can it be right with 'Ohayo' left out?"

"Ohayo." I greet you, for that's the tradition.
But henceforth I'll follow a different line.
The Average Traveler thinks it's his mission
To analyze, synthesize, fix and define
With attitude critical
Every political,
Social, commercial, religious, historical
Phase of Japan; and he'll beat it back home
Fully convinced he's a competent oracle.
Having the "innermost facts" in his dome:
Ready to lecture with wisdom impartial
About diplomatic and naval and martial
Topics and tendencies—ends and aims various
Which are infusing the Japanese mind.
True, if we question this tourist, we find
Most of his knowledge is wholly vicarious.
Gained from a week in this Orient land,
Largely by talk in the bar of "The Grand."
(That's Yokohama's world-famous hotel,
Where they feed poorly but charge very well.)

I won't be a typical tourist, I swear;
To solve Japan's problems I firmly refuse;
From all the "inside stuff" I sternly forbear—
I don't know Japan's International Views!
I'll simply endeavor to cast on the screen
A swift-moving picture of what I have seen.

Ahem! to begin with, we find as we scan
The changing existence of "Modern Japan."
A lot of confusion. Jinrikishas meet
With motor-cars honking along through the street,
While trolley-cars stop to let bullock carts pass,
And new service stations supply you with gas
Next door to a dealer whose living is made
By selling dried snakes to the medical trade!
And men wear kimonos, yet trouble your eyes
With celluloid collars and ready-made ties!
Japan! Where the limited trains thunder through
Quaint, primitive villages built of bamboo,
In which you would hear,
If you should draw near,
A music which quite unmistakably has
The sound of a phonograph yammering jazz!
Japan! It's a nation of queer contradictions,
Upsetting whatever may be your convictions.
A country where peasants are tilling the land—
Each foot of each thick-planted acre—by hand,
While over the heads of these slaves of the sod
The high tension power lines carry "the juice"
Whose strength is sufficient to turn every clod
And reap every harvest the fields may produce!

Orient, Occident, crazily jumbled—
Yet not quite *all* my illusions have crumbled.
There still is a deal of the ancient Japan
Which looks like the scenes on a Japanese fan.
The temples of Nikko are gorgeous and great;
Emblazoned with lacquer and carvings ornate,
They stand amid tall Cryptomeria trees—
Our Redwoods alone are more stately than these.



(Yet under the shadow of tombs and pagodas
Are stands where they sell you hard liquor or sodas;
And priests clad in robes made of purple and gold
Who chant incantations some centuries old

A Rhyme of the Rickshaw

And mutter strange prayers from antiquity's mists—
Wear cheap nickel watches attached to their wrists!)

Kyoto and Nara have temples galore
Where pilgrims in thousands still come to adore
The altars of Buddha—or maybe I'm wrong,
The worship of Shinto may gather the throng.
(What Shinto may mean
Isn't clear in my bean,

Or just what may be the relation between
The faith of the Buddhist and Shintoist devotee—
Not that I speak with the slightest of levity.)

Much of old wonder
And magic is there;
Temple gongs thunder
Their summons to prayer;
Marriage processions
Go merrily by;
Joyous impressions
Still wait for the eye:

Cherry bloom filling the land in the spring,
Purple wistaria rioting gay
Over the tomb of a shogun or king—
You shall find glamour enough as you stray!
Orient—Occident—what does it matter?
Still on the highways the *getas* clut-clatter;
Still in the evenings the lanterns of paper
Glow with the enchantment like fairy lamps hanging;
Still on the altar the priest lights his taper;
Still you will hear the quaint *samisens* twanging.
Geishas dance now as they've danced through the ages;
Japanese actors perform on the stages
Plays that were classic when Europe was all
Wilderness roamed by the Goth and the Gaul.

What if the pneumatic hammer
Does clamor,



Riveting girders of Occident steel?
What if the business of taxis
Still waxes?
What if American movies appeal?

Step off the thoroughfares into the side streets,
You will find color that's brilliant enough!
Life swarming thick in these seven foot wide streets,
Merchants who offer all manner of stuff—



Lacquer and cloisonné, silver and jade;
Flowers of tortoise-shell cunningly made;
Medicine cases with jewels inlaid;
Samisens, lanterns, silks, linen and cotton;
Combs, obis, jewels for Japanese belles;
Fish, flesh and fowl—pretty much of it rotten;
All sorts of viands—and all sorts of smells!
Smells of bad eggs and of incense and spice,
Smells of sour cabbage, of curry and rice!

Gosh, how they swarm, do these Japanese folk!
Milkmen who stagger along 'neath a yoke;
Motley street singers in colorful poses,
Singing their barbarous songs through their noses;
Peddlers with strange, unbelievable stocks—
Glow worms, for instance, at ten cents a box!
Rickshaw men threading their way through the crowd

Under the many-hued pennants and banners;
Fat dignitaries, inscrutable, proud;
Folk of all classes, all ages and manners;
Student and craftsman, policeman and coolie,
Sailor and soldier and beggar and cheat,
Jostling and jostled but never unruly,
Milling and churning about in the street!
Chattering girls in their Japanese dresses,
Obis, kimonos, of loveliest shades,
Wearing their lustrous and ebony tresses
Gleaming with combs and a-shine with pomades.
Wives walking meekly abaft of their spouses,
Geisha girls pattering by in the throng,
Old women, shuffling and limping along,
And, in the shops and bazaars and the houses,

A Rhyme of the Rickshaw

Peeping through panels and rolling on floors,
Sitting in windows and creeping through doors,
Babies and babies and babies!

They stare
Out at the world with a stoical air—
Solemn and serious,
Mute and mysterious,
Smiling but seldom, and never at all
Deigning to give any infantile squall.



Bundled in packs,
They are borne on the backs
Sometimes of fathers but mostly of mothers,
Oftener still on the backs of their brothers
Or of their sisters. You frequently see
Some little toddler of four or of three
Bearing a still younger babe on his shoulders—
Rather a shock to the foreign beholders!
But both of the babies seem satisfied quite,
And if they don't mind, it is doubtless all right.
The Japanese people are highly prolific,
Fecundity's one of their characteristics,
The birth-rate is marvelous, truly terrific—
But why should I bore you with vital statistics?
Suffice it to say
That one carries away
The thought that Japan must be raising today
Some millions of babies to every square mile.
They certainly grow with enormous profusion—
Which means quite a lot of them after a while.
It's quite a large problem—I draw no conclusion!

No doubt I might write in a style highly graphic
Of rivers, canals which are boiling with traffic,
Where sampans are painfully pushed with long poles,
And millions and millions of coolies, poor souls,
Live under the hatchways in dark little holes
Some six feet by five.
Then too, I might strive
To speak of those stately and beautiful hells
Of which every Japanese traveler tells,
Where girls, as of old,
Are bartered and sold;
But I shall be mute on that subject at present—
It's sordid and ugly and highly unpleasant.

And now it is proper to make a summation
Regarding the folk of the Japanese nation;
And here's what we find:

They are merry and kind,
With manners beguiling
And lips that are smiling,
But what they are thinking 'way down underneath,
Or what is behind all that flashing of teeth,
Is something of which I'm not able to speak—
You cannot get all of that dope in a week.
But this I can say: Though their manners are laudable,
Still, they *will* eat in a fashion that's audible.

A Japanese group
Makes noises with soup,
And Japanese crowds in a trolley or bus
Display no more manners, for instance, than Us!
They're clean, very clean—at the end of their toil
They go to a bath-house and merrily boil.
The Japanese girls for their parents turn martyrs,
The Japanese men wear silk socks—but no garters.
They laugh very easily,
Sing very wheezily.

Shiver in winter, or so I am told,
Sniffing and snuffling and suffering sneezily
(Houses made mostly of paper are cold).
They're highly convivial,
Fond of powwowing—
A meeting most trivial
Sets them to bowing.

And even their quarrels and various rows
Conclude with a number of curtsies and bows.
They're mad about baseball and movies and such,
Yet ancient traditions still hold them in clutch,
They're old as the hills and they're childishly curious,
Their art's mostly fine—but their goods mostly spurious.
They meet fate's decrees with a notable bravery,
Yet often enough to be far from a joke
They sell their own daughters to terrible slavery—
A mystical, strange, contradictory folk!



That's Modern Japan as I happen to see it;
I'm probably wrong—but if so, why—so be it!

"Ohayo—Good morning," we said at the start,
And so, at the end, as we turn to depart,
It's logical, fitting and proper and right
To say "Sayonara"—and that means
"Good night!"

All the rich tomato goodness!

The ruddy, juicy, tempting fruit, sun-ripened on the vines to delicious perfection! Made into Campbell's Tomato Soup the very day it is plucked! Each tomato washed five times in clear, pure running water! All skin, seeds and core fibre strained out from this smooth, rich puree! Golden butter, fresh from the country, blended in! The favorite soup of millions—and no wonder!

12 cents a can

Swinging gait and healthy stride
Ruddy cheeks that glow with pride—
You can tell from my good looks
I let Campbell's be my cooks!



That Night: The Vanderventer Mansion

(Continued from page 97)

At four o'clock she wandered through the bare gardens and looked apathetically at the cold bay.

She was slowly changing to the nail-head crêpe de Chine at five o'clock, hoping to consume an impossible amount of time, when Elsie, Miss Roberts's maid, came to her with a check for twenty dollars.

"Miss Pauline says that she may not be awake when Fargill takes you to the train in the morning," said Elsie, busily hooking and straightening Ellen's gown.

Ellen looked at the check thoughtfully. "I wouldn't do it again if it had another naught on it, Mrs. Carr. I don't see what you get out of it!"

"Oh, I don't know," said Elsie, yawning. "I have my boy with the Brothers, and he's doing well. And Kate's well married. Besides, I've been with Miss Pauline now for twenty-two years, long before I was married, and I always come back to her."

"Will this be pretty gay tonight?" Ellen asked.

Elsie made the immortal fltering gesture of a derisive Irishwoman; the head tossed back, the glance through narrowed lids, the outflung hand. "Wait until you see it!" she remarked simply.

Ellen's last hope died, and the next three hours were the longest in her life.

At five minutes before eight Miss Roberts issued from her room, magnificent in brocade, and ten minutes later Ellen, lurking unseen with Elsie in the lower back hallway, saw the company arriving.

There were elderly women, plain of hair, severely handsome of gown, with massive bare shoulders and large ringed hands. There were thin, eye-glassed, scholarly looking men. There were heavy, homely, well bred girls, one or two in misses' attire, white frocks and clubbed hair, three or four quite grown, in correct yet simple satin and lace. The men ranged from a gawky, handsome seventeen to a polished, handsome thirty; their voices were low; the women were far more forceful in both voice and manner.

The prospective groom was about twenty-four, blond and insignificant, nervous and eager in his unaccustomed importance. The bride-to-be was a large girl, very young, with a pleasant, anxious round face that broke into laughter easily. "How do you do, grandmother . . . Yes, Aunt Carrie. I didn't have a chance to thank you for the flowers, Uncle James, they only arrived tonight. I'm reading the book, Cousin Pauline, and I think it promises to be extremely interesting! At any rate, it keeps up my French—"

She said all this freshly, nicely, without feeling, and there was a murmur of laughter from the circle at the conclusion, as if she had been humorous.

Ellen heard other speeches, all in the firm, modulated, pleasant voices, as the women trooped upstairs. They came down again in a leisurely manner.

"Did you get hold of the woman, Anna? Splendid. No, I can't tomorrow—that's the lecture day. Tuesday. Tuesday, then. You took Isabelle to Lucas, didn't you, Alicia? How did you like him? That's very interesting—your getting such an impression. No, we like him very much—"

Herriott sent us to him. That's very interesting, really!"

Ellen also heard the younger generation. "Did you get your invitation to Mrs. Sigsbee's dinner, William?"

"I beg your pardon, Myra?"

"I said, did you get your card to Mrs. Sigsbee's dinner?"

"Oh, yes, thank you!"

"I met her downtown," explained the girl named Myra painstakingly. "And she spoke of you and said that because Aunt Elizabeth had gone south she wasn't quite sure where to reach you. I said that you stayed in the house, anyway—or at least that I was *sure* you did, and she said she thought you might have gone down to the Palms, in Florida, with Aunt Elizabeth. She said she and Mr. Sigsbee had seen you there last winter. But I explained that you had been in college then—or at least I *think* I explained that, or else she remembered it—"

This was earnestly and carefully delivered, and the young man named William had listened attentively, as had indeed several other young persons who seemed to have nothing to say to each other, and who all smiled sympathetically as he said:

"Oh, yes, I got it. Thanks ever so much!"

"I'm glad you did," said Myra.

"I haven't got mine," said a girl named Marcia, in a silence, during which they were all overattentive to spoons and soup.

"Oh, but I think you will, Marcia!"

"Oh, I'm sure I will! But I haven't been home, you know."

"You've been with Aunt Camilla?" said the bride-elect seriously.

"In Irvington," said a young man. Marcia nodded.

Silence. Silence. Everyone was quietly and absorbedly eating, with no sign of appetite, desire or hurry. The rich silks stirred; the big jeweled hands served their owners to all sorts of luscious food from platters, duly presented at the left side. Now and then a cultured voice broke the silence, pleasantly, and other voices murmured, but the topic never endured.

"I saw you, I think, going to Aunt Grace's on Thursday, Pauline? The car was just turning into Twelfth Street."

A pause. "When was that?"

"Last Thursday—about eleven, I think."

"Let me see. I don't think so. Thursday—"

A pause. "Possibly I was mistaken."

"Well—I don't think—oh, what am I saying, of course I was there Thursday! Yes, I saw her Thursday. She's not very well—I wasn't very well pleased—"

"I think she looks very thin," said a third voice.

"She doesn't sleep."

"No, so Ida said. She doesn't sleep."

Then silence again.

"My Lord, what a gay scene of revelry and sin!" whispered Ellen to Elsie as they peeped boldly in from behind the big screens that concealed the pantry door. "Wouldn't you think they'd talk!"

"What would they talk about?" Elsie asked. "They've nothing to say. You'd wonder at them sometimes—Christmas and the like, the beautiful thing; they give each other, and the quiet way they take

it. The swells are all like that, Ellen—you'll hear great yelling among the noovo reaches with their divorces and so on, but not our family! There's never been a divorce among the Pattersons and the Robertses—the old Humboldt crowd."

"You don't have to tell me," Ellen said, watching. "The wonder is they'd ever get up their nerve to get married—much less divorced! Look at that Florence, now, making talk with her friend; you can tell by her face that she's trying to think of things to say! My Lord, aren't they going to get married? Look at him eat! I want to say here and now to whom it may concern that when a man takes me to a meal, and *eats*, I know he's just killing time with me. Is there such a thing in the world as petting, or isn't there?"

"Not for them," Elsie said. "They act very dignified. She was abroad with her grandmother when all this was fixed up last year, and he was running after a chorus girl—the boys all do that, for a few months. But as soon as she come back, in November, everyone began to talk about it, and sit them together, and all that—"

"Mother of pearl!" Ellen ejaculated.

The candles burned solemnly on, in their heavy old silver sticks, as candles have burned beside the quick and the dead since civilization began. Menservants came and went noiselessly; now and then a kneeling youth replenished the old-fashioned coal fire with trembling hands, his forehead wet with anxiety lest a sudden crash of coal should shatter the peace of the room. Other youths bent reverently over trays, vessels were reverently changed, presented, removed, water was brought in gold bowls, fine linen was crumpled.

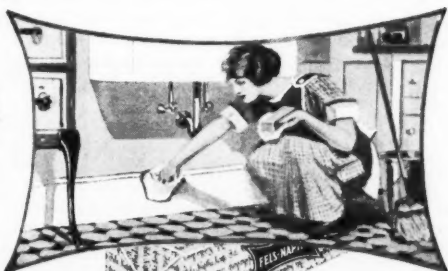
But Ellen saw little of it. It was already early, well before ten o'clock, when her beautiful eyes had cast their spell over James Reilly, the chauffeur of the Cutler Van Nuys Hungerfords, and he was jeopardizing his eleven years' job by borrowing his employer's car to drive this fascinating friend of Elsie's to her home, twenty-three miles away. An hour to come and an hour to go, reflected James, and the ravishing Ellen to talk to half the way! The girl fled upstairs, packed her bag, left a message for Miss Roberts, kissed Elsie in the exuberance of her heart, and was upon her way in one of those rushes of impulse so filling to the soul.

She chattered to James like a magpie, and he told his wife later that she was a darling little girl. She insisted upon his coming in to the warm Kane kitchen, when they reached it, and Joseph and Lizzie-Kate held him hospitably for a few minutes before he started back.

Meanwhile Ellen, brimming with laughter and joy and vitality, had jerked open bureau drawers, tossed her mahogany hair into an aureole, and discarded all raiment except a flimsy little filmy pink garment run with blue and lavender ribbons, a brief pink satin frock with a silver lace collar, silver stockings rolled below her firm little slender knees, and silver slippers that were hideous and worn before the slim foot went into them, and were then transformed into one more tribute to the glory and beauty of youth.



You can tell Fels-Naptha by its clean Naptha odor



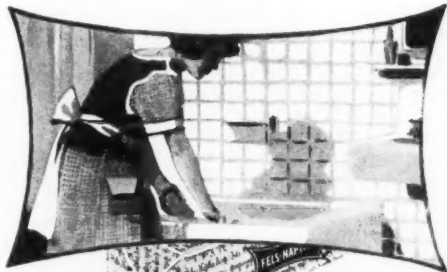
Fels-Naptha safely gives painted woodwork the brightness of sunshine. It makes scrubbing of floors unnecessary. Just mop



The real naptha in Fels-Naptha goes deep down through every thread, loosens all the dirt, and safely makes clothes clean through and through



No greasy streaks on dainty china. Fels-Naptha does quick work, and is harmless to dishes and hands



Glistening! Bathroom fixtures are easily kept spotless and unscratched with Fels-Naptha Soap

The foundation of sanitary housecleaning!

Fels-Naptha Soap!

It thoroughly routs all dirt and grease. It spreads Fels-Naptha Cleanliness throughout the house, and makes a brighter, healthier home.

Get a ten-bar carton of Fels-Naptha Soap for Fall housecleaning. Keep it on hand for your weekly laundering and cleaning. Give your home daily the benefit of Fels-Naptha Cleanliness.

Fels-Naptha gives two cleanings at the same time—one with soap and water; another with real naptha. It is safe for hands, clothes, and everything that soap and water will not harm. It makes work easier, and you get it done sooner.

Fels-Naptha is more than soap. It is more than soap and naptha. It is the exclusive Fels-Naptha blend of splendid soap and real naptha in a way that gives you the best of both these two great cleaners at one time, and in one economical golden bar.

Order Fels-Naptha Soap from your grocer today!

TEST Fels-Naptha for thorough cleaning. Send 2c in stamps for sample bar. Address Fels-Naptha Soap, Philadelphia



The 10-bar Carton

The convenient way to buy Fels-Naptha is in the carton shown above. Ten full-sized bars neatly packed. Have a carton handy!

THE GOLDEN BAR WITH THE CLEAN NAPHTHA ODOR

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Powder and a touch of lip red, and perfume rubbed upon her bare shoulders, and dangling pearls in her small ears, and Ellen, catching up an aged coat of swan's-down and chenille, gave her mirror one exultant and elated glance. The miracle of the gleaming ivory skin, with its stains of scarlet on the cheek bones, the toss of mahogany hair, the liquid glitter of the blue, blue eyes in their upcurling smoky lashes, were enough to set any twenty year old heart dancing. Ellen's step, as the long-suffering Joe escorted her through the cold, bare streets, where the dry air smelled raw, and of snow, was like a dance.

Alice's party was at its height. It was not a large affair, nor was the Riordan home one fitted for hospitality on a grand scale, but there were perhaps twenty or twenty-two young persons present, and each and every one of them was engrossed in a love affair so enthralling, so absorbing, so delicious, that ecstasy visibly brimmed the room. Rooms, rather, for four of the six the apartment held had been turned over to the merry-makers.

There was of course, to begin with, the front parlor, a narrow space where there were stuffed chairs, a sofa, a table holding an artificial plant, a false fireplace with a gas log, a large portrait of Alice's late father, on an easel, a phonograph and a small piano coasting with sheet music.

Then there was the back parlor, where the folding bed had been turned into a divan, but where the bureau, with Alice's powder jar and hand mirror in evidence, and a stationary washstand, were undisguised. And there was a small front hall bedroom, where the girls and boys had piled their hats and wraps upon Clement's bed, and where the more sentimentally inclined could find a second's privacy, sitting on the coats in the dark, and shouting indignantly when unsympathetic friends intruded with shouts and derision.

Lastly, there was the dining room, which no one might enter now, but which everyone knew was ready for the feast. Alice and her chum and her brother had worked hard upon it for hours, with Japanese lanterns that dropped their light wood bases, and with mis-matched plates and napkins, and with tissue paper witches and pumpkins and strings of crepe paper ribbon.

The hosts and guests were scattered about in the front rooms when Ellen arrived. Two murmuring couples were sunk into seats upon the divan, the men's hands locked about their knees, the girls stretched luxuriously back, their little heads resting against the red upholstery. All four were scarlet and breathless, and occasionally the boys wiped their foreheads; they had evidently been dancing. The phonograph was going busily, and two or three other couples were actually dancing; Ellen saw Teresa Towey's black head against the brown shoulder of Tommy. Leonard's office suit, and that the blue-black cheek of Harry White—once intended for the Jesuit seminary—was "parked" against that of Myra Mhoon. Katherine Dempsey was ensconced in a big armchair with Jerry Tierney, emitting shriek after shriek of

laughter; Alice was flushed and vociferous, struggling in the hall with John Walsh for the possession of a clutched paper; and Mollie Deane, who was one of the rather unfortunate homely girls who imitate the gay, spontaneous manner of the born coquette, was at the piano, with young Doctor Maloney. Mollie was noisily trying to find something humorous in banging the keys, and trying to sing against the general uproar.

Mrs. Riordan, a large, bland, self-possessed woman in a white shirtwaist turned in at the throat and a dragging serge skirt, occasionally emerged from the long hall that connected the culinary regions with the scene of the gaiety, and gave her children's guests an infinitely superior glance. Her big firm mouth would twitch with a sort of unwilling amusement when the young persons circled round her. She assumed toward them an air of great and good-natured contempt.

"Well, wouldn't you think you were all in an asylum!" she would say scornfully. "Alice, dear—remember there's others in the house! That poor old man upstairs that has the kidney trouble so bad——"

Alice, beside herself with excitement and merriment, would encircle the big square waist with a slim powdered arm.

"He should worry! It's time he croaked, anyway!"

"Alice—that's a wild way to talk—leave me go, Jawn!" poor Mrs. Riordan would gasp, swung into the mazes of the dance. Now and then, bustling forth, she pretended to have some business with her son. Everything had been all settled hours ago, and the ice cream had come, and there was nothing about which the most scrupulous hostess could worry——

Ah, but it was such a delight to this stout, gray, illiterate, hard working, simple, shrewd old woman to put her hand on his arm, and have the handsome face turn and become attentive, and to have the bigness and gentleness and sweetness and impudence that was Clem—bone of her bone, flesh of her flesh—all her own, just for a few seconds, again!

"Go on, ma—shoot!"

"Darlin'—but you were talking to Myra?"

"Myra doesn't care! As long as it isn't Harry White!"

A "you shut up!" from Myra here, and a flourish of the rather mangy green two-feather fan she carried with her blue satin dress.

"Darlin', I wanted to be sure me kitchen clock is right, the way I wouldn't be boiling the coffee to black paint——"

"Your clock is about a minute and a half fast, ma, I told you this morning! And I suppose that'd ruin the coffee?"

"Don't talk to me so rude, Clem." But she was not angry, and he knew it. She wanted, as his sweetheart might have done, just to hear his voice, in all sorts of moods.

Her heart was singing tonight. The Murphy girl was the only one Clem had ever given two looks to, and she was not here tonight. Mrs. Riordan had not missed the opportunity to say innocently that perhaps the ger'l had other friends—

something she'd rather do than come to a little party. And Clem had visibly writhed.

But now it was eleven o'clock, and he seemed his sweetest self. Not gay, not wild and excitable and noisy, as he sometimes was of late, but gentle and attentive and serious.

Her heart stood still, at half-past eleven, when there was a ring at the bell and an uproar in the hallway, and laughter and shrieks and the off-flinging of an old coat; and Ellen, in her silver lace and slippers, stood revealed, slim, dewy eyed, radiantly fresh in this somewhat jaded atmosphere, and in a perfect gale of joy at finding herself among her own again!

And the sober, tender, filial Clem disappeared at the same instant; he was trembling, pale, hoarse, he was all anxiety and awkwardness, he was the blundering, the stubborn, the commanding yet pleading male again.

His mother retired to the kitchen, with her throat dry and her hands cold, and looked at salad and paper napkins and coconut cake with eyes dazed by pain. She turned on the faucet and waited until the water ran smoking hot and then said bewilderedly: "Whatever am I doin'? I don't want anny hot water——"

She counted piled plates and said: "Eleven. I don't know how many they'll need—there's plenty, I guess."

And she stood perfectly still in the center of the kitchen floor, where a square, black-browed little boy in a roll neck sweater had come in years ago, to throw his arithmetic and his second reader on the table, and ask for bread and butter——

Where a tall, grave, lean lad of thirteen in his best black suit—his first communion suit, indeed, but worn today at his father's funeral—had put his young, thin arm about her fresh weeds and said with his mouth trembling: "Don't you, care, ma, I'll look out for you and Alice, honest I will——"

Where a fat baby, her first-born, had watched her doing her dishes, and made her laugh with his "ga-ga?" when she began to pour milk into his bottle——

Agony. Agony. Agony. He was in love with the Murphy girl, with her hair bobbed and her skirts up to her knees, like the rest of them——

His mother sat down at the kitchen table and put her old head down on her arms.

But Ellen knew nothing of this. She had surrendered her little person into Clem's shaking arms, and the perfume of her mahogany mop was making all his senses swim in a sea of glory and pain and joy and despair. The punctual phonograph played "I've got those 'Baby-my-vacation's-over bloo-hoo-hoos!" and Ellen sang as she danced.

"Ellen, there's going to be a grand movie at the Star tomorrow," sang out Myra Mhoon, from over the shoulder of Mr. Harry White. "What do you say we all go?"

"Oh, let's take a walk!" Ellen suggested. "You can't believe anything you see in the movies. It's all bunk!"

In October COSMOPOLITAN, Kathleen Norris presents a delicious satire on Oldsters who try to keep Youngsters in glass cases—and a story with a real throb as well

Thousands of girls have built up a fresh, clear skin— by using these special treatments

Perhaps you feel that your skin is the kind that can never be really beautiful.

You are wrong! Give your skin the special care it needs, and you can make it what you will!

Each day your skin is changing; old skin dies and new takes its place.

By caring for this new skin in the right way, you can overcome defects that have troubled you for months, or even for years.

A special treatment for each type of skin

The right treatment for each different type of skin is given in the booklet, "*A Skin You Love to Touch*," which is wrapped around every cake of

Woodbury's Facial Soap. (Two of these treatments are reprinted below.)

Get a cake of Woodbury's Facial Soap today, and begin, now, to use the right treatment for your skin. Within a week or ten days you can bring about a marked improvement in your complexion.

The same qualities that give Woodbury's its beneficial effect in overcoming common skin troubles make it ideal for regular toilet use. A 25-cent cake lasts a month or six weeks.

Three Woodbury skin preparations— guest size—for 10 cents

For 10 cents we will send you a miniature set of the Woodbury skin preparations, containing samples of Woodbury's Facial Soap, Facial Cream, and Facial Powder, together with the treatment booklet, "*A Skin You Love to Touch*."

Send for this set today. Address The Andrew Jergens Co., 1609 Spring Grove Avenue, Cincinnati, Ohio. If you live in Canada, address The Andrew Jergens Co., Limited, 1609 Sherbrooke St., Perth, Ont. English Agents: H. C. Quelch & Co., 4 Ludgate Square, London, E. C. 4.



With the right care you, too, can have
"A Skin You Love to Touch"

Perhaps your skin belongs to one of these types—Are you giving it the right treatment?

1. For an oily skin—

EVERY night before retiring, cleanse your skin by washing in your usual way with Woodbury's Facial Soap and lukewarm water. Wipe off the surplus moisture, but leave the skin slightly damp. Now, with warm water work up a heavy lather of Woodbury's Facial Soap in your hands. Apply it to your face and rub it into the pores thoroughly. Rinse with warm water, then with cold. If possible, rub your face for thirty seconds with a piece of ice.

2. For a sensitive skin—

EACH night before retiring, dip a soft washcloth in warm water and hold it to your face. Now make a warm water lather of Woodbury's Facial Soap and dip your cloth up and down in it until the cloth is "fluffy" with the soft white lather. Rub this lathered cloth gently over your skin until the pores are thoroughly cleansed. Rinse first with warm water, then with clear, cool water, and dry carefully.

Get a cake of Woodbury's Facial Soap today—begin your treatment tonight! Within a week or ten days your skin will show marked improvement.



1—If your skin is too
oily, use treatment No.
1 given at the right.

2—If your skin is sensitive and easily irri-
tated, use treatment No. 2 given at the right

Thumbs Down

(Continued from page 57)

"I—let's stay home, Max. You haven't stayed home with me—"

"Don't be a goof. If I wanted to sit around with my slippers on I wouldn't come here. What'd we do, look at each other? Or sing?"

"I'm awfully tired. If we go out, I shall get cock-eyed again."

Her eyes, seeking desperately, fell on the volume of Masfield. She took it up, opened the pages, began to read:

Quinquireme of Nineveh, from distant
Ophir,
Rowing home to haven in sunny Palestine—
With a cargo of ivories and apes and
peacocks,
Sandalwood, cedarwood, and sweet white
wine.

Stately Spanish galleon, sailing from the
Isthmus,
Dipping through the waters by the palm-
green shores,
With a cargo of diamonds, emeralds,
amethysts,
Topaz and cinnamon and gold midores.

The words hung in the room like splendid banners. In Dorothy's eyes were visions.

For a moment the man seemed caught in the spell of the poetry and her voice. His eyes grew dark. His shoulders settled.

"Ah—Max—if life could only give us things like that! Things that are good and yet make you happy. If we could only get a kick out of fine, splendid things like that. They make me want to get away from—parties and people that don't mean anything. I've been making motion pictures in this place for ten years and I'm getting so the sight of a camera gives me the screaming mimis."

He rose swiftly. "You've got 'em now, I guess. Stop this fooling around with bum poetry. Go get on something snappy and come out with the gang. You need cheering up." He took her in his arms.

Dorothy Vicente looked up at him as a woman looks who has given away her soul.

A half hypnotized thing.

But the visions had gone from her eyes and the glory from her lips.

Oddly enough, it was the very next day that Mrs. Max Franklin filed a divorce suit against her husband and a \$250,000 suit for alienation of affections against Dorothy Vicente.

The dingy little court-room was packed to the very last inch of space.

Outside the rain poured down and splashed endlessly from a drain against the window ledge, like a drum of fate.

The jury came in one by one and took their seats in the worn, creaking chairs.

Dorothy Vicente looked at them and wondered what they could possibly know or understand about her and her life. They seemed as far removed from it as though they belonged on another planet.

The bailiff, a slight, nervous young man, rapped on the table with his hammer.

The defense counsel said impressively, "Miss Vicente, take the stand, please."

A murmur like an approaching thunderstorm swept the row of staring people and rumbled even out into the corridors.

This was the moment for which they

had waited, upon which they had even gambled. Courthouse attachés were giving odds that Miss Vicente would never take the stand in her own defense.

Dorothy Vicente got up from her chair and stood, evidently bewildered.

The platinum fox about her shoulders shook with her shuddering.

But her eyes were like pools of hot steel.

The clerk motioned her to the witness chair, with its leather pads worn deep and ragged by the shoulders of criminals.

The men and women of the jury saw a small, almost painfully thin girl, with enormous brown eyes and a bare, long throat. She had taken off her hat and her head rested against the back of the seat. Her pallor was terrific, but there was fight in every line of her jaw and in the curve of her hands that clenched over the thumbs.

There are some women who are surrounded by an almost irresistible charm. It has nothing to do with beauty and almost nothing to do with sex, in its more obvious meanings. In their faces is a strange and unexplainable mingling of the spiritual and the womanly.

They awaken, all unconsciously, an instant response in every heart. This charm pervades them like the fragrance of a flower. Both men and women love them greatly, whether they be worthy or not.

Dorothy Vicente was one of these women.

The clock ticked. Hour after hour.

At the end of three hours they saw her still in that chair. Beaten. Utterly beaten. It was like seeing a beautiful flag trailed in the dust.

Tears had washed the beauty from her face, yet it shone with a pale light of suffering. For her lawyer, who had known so well how to count upon her charm with the jury, had not known well enough to count upon the fact that Dotty Vicente would not lie.

She had never lied. She would not lie now. Hammered into admission after admission. Into answer after answer. They might condemn her for the things those admissions revealed, but the man or woman in that court-room who felt no pity for her had never tasted the salt of tears.

The opposing counsel was suavely kind. Helpful. He made everyone feel that he hated to torture this creature as much as they hated to see her tortured. But that after all what she had done was her own fault. The questions must be asked.

"Now, Miss Vicente, when you first met Mr. Franklin ten years ago did you know he was married?"

Dorothy Vicente faced him squarely, but not once had she glanced toward the silent, well groomed self-possession of the woman who accused her.

"No," she said. "I never knew until it was too late."

"You expect me to believe, then—"

It was too much. Dorothy Vicente leaned forward and the flash of her sudden rage dried the tears on her cheeks.

"Believe!" she cried. "I don't care what you believe!"

She swept him aside with her eyes, and across the few feet that divided them she spoke to the woman who accused her.

It was perhaps the supreme compliment

to her great dramatic art that no one in that whole court-room moved while she spoke. Those things happen now and then, even in a court-room.

"Know? I didn't know anything. Do you know how old I was? I was fifteen. Fifteen. I didn't know what life was."

"Do you know what I came from? I came from—blue mud. I was pretty near raised in the gutter. I was beaten and kicked. I knew what it was to be hungry. Did you ever lie awake all night and whimper because you were too hungry to go to sleep? Well, I have."

"When I was nine I worked in a factory. When I was fourteen I worked as a waitress in a section camp on the railroad. My mother was the cook. That's why my hands are like this—see."

She flung them out—knotted and blunted and heavy.

"My mother was a good woman. She is a good woman. But my father was a devil. He hated me. I don't know why, unless because I was the biggest of all that flock of dirty little brats he'd fathered. Sometimes at night mother and I used to cry—but we kept mighty darn quiet. We were just so tired. I never had but one dream. To get away. To get away."

"Maybe you heard about an artist coming to sketch, and he took me to New York and painted me."

"When I was fifteen I met Max Franklin. You're his wife. Maybe you love him, too. But I know I love him. I loved him then—always—forever."

"It was him saw the thing in me—whatever it is that makes me act. He brought me here. He taught me all I know. He beat it and kicked it into me. And I loved him all the time. Don't you ever believe it when they say there've been other men in my life. There's never been anybody else. He's my man."

"But I was a good girl. I was good and I was stupid. And I was pretty and young. He loved me because I was pretty and young, but he hated me because I was good and stupid. I didn't know how to be anything else."

"But I've learned. Oh, how I've learned! I've learned to be low and common. Oh, I'm one of the girls you condemn and call rotten! I know. But I know, too, how men drag those poor, ignorant, simple-minded little creatures down—down. It sounds melodramatic, doesn't it? Truth is usually like that. It's never enough for those men to win a girl's love. They've got to make her a fit companion for the beast in them. And it happens all the time to girls like me—in Hollywood and a lot of other places."

"Why did I? Why did I? Because I was nothing. Because I was a fool. A young, untrained, uneducated girl, who'd had all the youth and life stifled out of her and who was suddenly heaped with fame and praise and money and luxury. And—the wrong kind of love."

"Do you think we want to do what we do? Do you think we want to get cheap and common and foul-mouthed?"

She flung her arms out then and for an instant it looked as though she were hung on a cross. The court-room stayed motionless in the silence.

EVERY YOUNG WIFE MUST MAKE THIS DECISION

*What will her face be in one—
in five—in ten years' time?*

NEW surroundings—new responsibilities—new adjustments to life. And with all these a new loveliness in her face. Yet in a few years it has gone! What has become of it?

Should she have trusted this loveliness to keep on renewing itself through the strain of her new responsibilities? Did she allow the soft brilliance of her clear skin to grow dull—its smoothness to be marred by little roughnesses? So many girls lose this young freshness in the first few years of marriage.

But today they know that this loveliness must be guarded, that it will be lost unless the *right* care be given.

Many a wife has learned that she can keep her skin supple and lovely by giving it regularly the two fundamental things it needs to keep it young—a perfect cleansing at night and a delicate freshening and protection for the day. And she has learned that the Pond's Method of two creams based on these two essentials of her skin, brings more wonderful results than any other.

*Two Creams—each different—each marvelous
in its effect on her skin*

Two Creams she would not give up for any others in the world! First the exquisite cleansing of Pond's Cold Cream that leaves her skin so delightfully fresh, so luxuriously soft. Then the instant freshening she adores with Pond's Vanishing Cream and its careful protection that she has learned prevents coarsening. These two creams keep for her the smoothness of texture and that particular fresh transparency that she wants to be her charm ten years from now as it is today.

DECIDE TO USE THIS FAMOUS METHOD

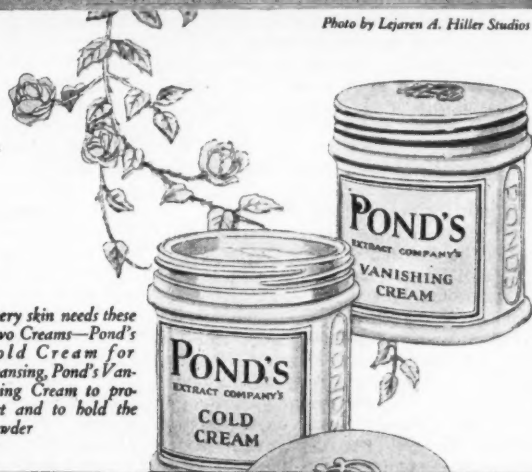
Keep your skin charmingly young—for years

Do this tonight. With the finger tips apply Pond's Cold Cream freely. The very fine oil in it softens your skin and penetrates every pore. Let it stay on a minute—now wipe it off with a soft cloth. The black that comes off shows you how carefully this cream cleanses. **Do this twice.** Your skin looks fresh and is beautifully supple.

Then in the morning, smooth on Pond's Vanishing Cream lightly over your whole face. Now if you wish, rouge—powder. How smooth and velvety your face feels to your hand. The appearance of your skin and the compliments of your friends for as long as you use these Two Creams will prove to you how wonderful they keep your skin. Begin tonight to use Pond's Two Creams regularly—buy both creams in any drug or department store. The Pond's Extract Company.



Photo by Lejaren A. Hiller Studios



*Every skin needs these
Two Creams—Pond's
Cold Cream for
cleansing, Pond's Van-
ishing Cream to pro-
tect and to hold the
powder*

GENEROUS TUBES—MAIL COUPON WITH 10c TODAY

The Pond's Extract Co., 134-S Hudson St., New York

Ten cents (10c) is enclosed for your special introductory tubes of the two creams every normal skin needs—enough of each cream for two weeks' ordinary toilet uses.

Name.....

Street.....

City..... State.....

Dorothy Vicente got down from the witness chair and went over to the woman who had accused her.

"You're his wife," she said wearily. "I've never taken anything you ought to want. I've made a fortune for you, too. Maybe you should be glad about me—look what I've kept out of your home. I'm just"—she tried to laugh—"just less than the dust. Couldn't you manage to forgive me?"

Rose ushered the woman into the upstairs boudoir where Dorothy Vicente lay on the big daybed. She was a tall, flat-bosomed woman, with kind eyes and stooping shoulders. Dotty got up and came to shake hands with her.

Her brown head came only to the woman's armpit as they faced each other.

"Please sit down," she said. "I'm sorry to ask you to come up here. But I'm not awfully chipper today. Little touch of the pip, I guess."

The woman smiled, and when she smiled her face softened and grew sweet. It was a smile that Dotty had often imagined, but she could not remember exactly where.

She sat down and Dotty squatted on the end of the daybed, her feet in their frivolous mules tucked under her.

"Will you have a drink?" asked Dotty cheerfully, and then, catching Rose's glance, she added quickly, "Rose, go make us a nice pitcher of lemonade—or grape wash or something."

The woman let Rose go without a word of protest. Her calm, shining eyes were fixed on the little figure before her.

"It's a beautiful day, isn't it?" asked Dorothy Vicente. She reached to the gold box on the tiny table and opened it. Instantly a tiny flow of dance music burst out and Dotty laughed in real glee as she took out a cigarette.

She did not offer one to her guest.

"Did you want to see me about anything special or did you just come for a visit?" asked Dotty pleasantly.

The woman seemed to find speech just a little difficult. "I think you know," she said in a quiet, deep voice, "that I am a probation officer of the juvenile court."

Dotty's trick eyebrow went up. "Yes, Rose told me something like that. But I'm so darn ignorant, I don't know whether you want me to build a statue in the park or admit the name of my bootlegger."

"The juvenile court supervises the matter of the children of the state."

One of Dotty's hands flew up as though to ward off a blow.

Then she said with a valiant smile: "That's fine. Reform schools and all. Say, I know a couple of movie stars of tender years that ought to be put away somewhere. Can you suggest anything?"

"I am in charge," went on the woman reluctantly, "of the department which investigates complaints made to our office regarding children who are not in proper homes or under proper charge."

The girl could not speak. Deadly fear made her heart cold. Her eyes pleaded, pleaded. Stricken. So that the woman had to steady herself to go on.

"I am sorry, Miss Vicente, if I must cause you pain. But we have received,

since your court case a few months ago, many complaints about the little girl who is living with you. A—a good many people seem to think that you are not a fit person to care for her. They insist that she should be taken away from you. I did not move in the matter until the number actually forced me to. Nor until I had looked into the matter thoroughly."

"Taken—away from me?" asked Dotty Vicente.

The woman faced her squarely then and her eyes were very kind. There seemed to be a light back of them. "Do you think yourself that you are the right person to bring up a little girl?"

Her big, efficient hand indicated the cigarette, the picture on the dressing table, the lace pajamas, the very fragrance of scent itself.

"I—I love her an awful lot," said Dotty Vicente, and she went and knelt down at the woman's feet and looked into her eyes.

"See—see. I love her an awful lot."

The woman put her hand upon the smooth brown head. "I know, my dear. But love is never enough. Human love. Sometimes love is the very worst thing in the world, unless it's backed up by principle and character and goodness."

"I'm—not good," said Dotty Vicente. "But—I thought maybe just because I had made so many mistakes I might keep her from doing it."

"No," said the woman. "Don't you know you can never teach what you haven't learned yourself? Ugly thoughts, evil ways, lies, indulgences—why, they live. They live and fill every inch of a home like this. That baby could never draw a breath that didn't have a poison germ in it. Don't you see that your very thoughts poison her, as a mother sometimes poisons her baby with the milk it draws? Nobody learns from other people's mistakes. They only learn from truth and fine discipline and a right example. Do you think you're a good example for this little girl?"

"Maybe—maybe I could change. I could—oh, I could try!"

"Isn't it too late for that?"

"God doesn't ever think it's too late, does He?"

"Not for you. But that's the saddest part of evil. You can't do for your loved ones. Not for you—but you can't ask that baby to walk the way back with you. For—you have to carry the cross every step of the way back."

"I—I don't want to do anything that will hurt my baby. I don't. Maybe—you're right. Maybe I shouldn't have her. Maybe. But—I have been good to her. Oh, I have been good to her!"

"I know. I know. I wish—let me make a suggestion, a proposition to you. If you care to try it, I will take her in charge. We can put her in a good school—you will be glad to pay for it, of course—and when she is a little older, if you and I feel sure that this is the right place for her, I'll give her back to you. If you have changed."

"You mean—you'd give me a chance to—to be good enough for my baby? Oh—for her! Maybe—I could have her again? I'll try! I'll try!"

"Yes, I'll give you a chance. There are some things you must give up. You understand that. But—you love her so."

"I'll fight. I'll try. I can—I know I can. Oh, God will help me, won't He?"

"Yes, dear."

"A school? They would—be kind to her? Once, she was hurt. And she loves to be cuddled at night and have her toes kissed and—would they cuddle her a little, do you think? She doesn't know—I'm not fit to be her mother. She'll miss me, maybe. O my God!"

"I know. I know. But cuddling isn't always—"

"I guess not. Only she is so very little—so little—"

The door swung open.

Across the floor toddled a small, curly-haired person in a suit of tiny, woolly sleepers. Her little head was flung back in a very abandon of joy, and at sight of the lacy figure she laughed until the dimples flooded her small face.

Dotty Vicente sat down on the floor and held out her arms. Instantly the small person flung herself into the silken lap.

"Sing 'Sad Cow,'" she commanded imperiously.

Dotty Vicente looked up at the woman from under a crown of thorns.

Then she began to sing, merrily, with just that touch of serious rollicking that all small persons love:

A sad old cow to herself once said,
As the wind whistled through her shed:
"To head a drum they will take my skin,
And they'll file my bones for a big hairpin.
The scraps of bone they will make into dice,
And sell them off at a very low price.
My sinews they'll make into whips, I wot,
And my flesh they'll put in a big soup pot."

The small person gurgled and looked up. "Crying?" she said, puzzled. "Somefing hurt you, Moms?"

"No, dear," said Dotty Vicente. "I'm—I'm just crying about the sad old cow."

The secretary handed the afternoon paper to the tall, calm woman in gray who sat behind the big desk in one of the offices of the juvenile court of Los Angeles County.

"I suppose you saw about Dorothy Vicente," she asked. "Isn't it too bad?"

The woman sat silent so long that the secretary decided she had not heard. But she was only reading over and over the one little farewell sentence Dotty Vicente had written: "I couldn't make the grade."

At last she said: "Poor child. The way back was too hard for her. With bleeding footsteps. With bleeding footsteps. Only—she died trying, Bessie. Perhaps nobody knows that but me. She got part way up the hill, Bessie. She wouldn't give in. They licked her. But somewhere—somewhere else where everything isn't quite so hard and everything isn't stacked against her—she'll work it out."

There was silence in the room.

Then the woman spoke again and her voice had the deep promise of an Easter bell. "I know she will."

A true story of modern detective work in the world's most famous secret service, Scotland Yard, is told by the man who was formerly its chief—Sir Basil Thomson—in October COSMOPOLITAN



Are you buying your medicine cabinet requisites "in the dark"?

YOU realize the danger of taking a dose of medicine in the dark.

Isn't it equally unwise to buy products for your medicine cabinet in the dark, knowing nothing of their purity or their maker's integrity?

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This list includes only the familiar products that are in constant use in thousands of homes. Check your needs and take this list to your druggist to fill:

Squibb's Sodium Bicarbonate

Squibb's Epsom Salt

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Squibb's Castor Oil

Squibb's Boric Acid Granular

Squibb's Boric Acid Powdered

Squibb's Stearate of Zinc

Squibb's Nursery Powder

Squibb's Milk of Magnesia

Squibb's Milk Sugar

Squibb's Cold Cream

Squibb's Talcum Powder

Squibb's Dental Cream

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THE "PRICELESS INGREDIENT" OF EVERY PRODUCT
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The Unbroken Chain

(Continued from page 32)

Blackburn, but I surely would like to have a look at your neighbor's spine. Mind you, though, no living soul is ever to know what I've just said. Maybe I'm wrong—the Lord knows I hope I am."

But of course Judge Sylvester never had his curious wish. Two days later he finished out his visit and went back to his home near Augusta, and two weeks later, to the day, Mr. Brissot was dead at a grade-crossing of the Long Island railroad after an electric locomotive ran into his automobile.

He instantly was killed and so was his chauffeur. The third occupant of the car was the famous explorer and big game hunter, Colonel Bate-Farnaro, who had licked the desert and bested the jungle, only, by this ironic trick of destiny, to be smashed up while riding on a paved avenue through a modern real estate development in a suburban addition to one of Greater New York's outlying suburbs.

This noted man, who was English by birth and of mixed English and Italian ancestry, had been staying a couple of days with his friend, Mr. Brissot. The two men had known each other abroad, and when the Colonel came over here to lecture, Mr. Brissot invited him down to his place for a quiet week-end in the country before the beginning of the tour. On a Monday morning they started back for town in Brissot's closed car, bringing with them the visitor's luggage. Being mainly British, the Colonel might travel across Thibet with a tooth brush for equipment—if he had to—but by that same token could not bring himself to go Friday-to-Mondaying without taking along at least one very large, very English looking kit bag and a suitcase or so.

Where the collision occurred, one of the electrified branches of the railway bisected the highroad at acute angles. The junction for the moment was untended; the watchman was absent from his post. It was a bad time, as it proved, for him to be absent. For a high-powered locomotive was moving west at high speed, carrying a single flat with an emergency crew aboard and bound for the scene of a small freight derailment farther down the line. The engineer of the wrecker had orders to make time, and he was making it—giving his motor all the juice she would take.

Two hundred yards distant the locomotive tore out of a shallow cut into view of the crossing just as the Brissot car came up a slight elevation. The engineer did what he could, which was mighty little, seeing he could not materially check his gait in so short a distance. He sounded his whistle in warning and he shut off his power and braked down hard.

The chauffeur did his best, too, but it would seem the trouble with him—a fatal trouble, as it turned out—was that in the imminent and impending face of the whizzing menace which so suddenly had come upon him, he altogether lost his head. Subsequent inquiry tended to develop the fact—or rather the theory—that first he tried to get over the track before the onrushing locomotive and then that he tried to halt his car on the nearer side and that the upshot was he stalled his

motor. Be that as it may, the outstanding circumstance was this: The automobile, at a dead stop, stood squarely straddling the rails for an appreciable period of time before the squatty locomotive, bleating in sharp staccato blasts, struck it broadside and flung it sixty feet in a scrapheap of crumpled metal and broken parts.

Mr. Brissot and Luigi, his chauffeur, were both of them dead when they were picked up. The latter terribly was mutilated; he was scrodded like a fish where he had been hurled through his windshield. By some freak of physics or of fate, Colonel Bate-Farnaro had been spared his life. He had a broken leg, though, and several of his ribs were caved in. He was carried, unconscious, to a hospital in Jamaica. At first it was feared his skull might be fractured. As it proved, he was suffering from a considerable concussion of the brain; that, mainly, was what kept him unconscious so long. It was two days later when he came to his senses and a day after that before he was allowed to see visitors.

The first to see him then was the late Mr. Brissot's lawyer. Mr. Cyrus Tyree came hurrying from town immediately on hearing of the lamentable thing that had happened; he had been waiting, ever since, for this opportunity to get from the injured Englishman his version of the affair. Mr. Tyree anticipated, since Colonel Bate-Farnaro was accustomed to quick danger, that the latter had kept his head and should be able to give a reasonably coherent account of what passed in those few dreadful seconds between the appearance of the wrecker and its collision with the automobile. Nor was the lawyer disappointed in this hope. But almost the first extended remark by the bandaged-up Englishman seemed profoundly to disturb the caller.

"Ever since I got my wits back I've been lying here puzzling over a most extraordinary circumstance connected with this distressing occurrence," said the invalid. "In the midst of my regret for the shocking death of my host and my reflections on my own close squeak, I've not been able to put it out of my mind. Poor dear Brissot, God rest him, always struck me as being a remarkably close-mouthed person—not in the least given to idle talk about this and that. But why he should have been so secretive regarding his African experiences—I mean to say, why to me, of all persons, he should have been so secretive—well—"

"Pardon me," interrupted Mr. Tyree, in a suddenly concerned way; "did you say his African experiences?"

"Yes, yes. He had knowledge, naturally, of the years I'd spent in interior Africa. If only he'd chosen to tell me that he'd been there too we'd have had something in common, something that would have been most confoundedly interesting for both of us to talk about."

"But Mr. Brissot was never in Africa," said Mr. Tyree, still in that strained tone; "I can positively assure you of that."

"My dear sir, I can't possibly be mistaken," The Colonel spoke emphatically.

"I can only repeat that you must be

mistaken," stated Mr. Tyree gravely. "My late client had traveled extensively, as you probably know. But he never visited Africa. There were reasons why, of all the places in the world, he would never have gone—"

He broke off and started afresh: "I give you my word of honor, Colonel, that Claybourne Brissot never in all his life set foot on African soil."

"Your pardon again, my dear fellow, but surely you are the one who is wrong. We practically are strangers; even so, I assume that as Brissot's solicitor and presumably as his friend, you enjoyed his confidence?"

"I did, to a greater extent than any living being did."

"Well then, in that case, there was a chapter in his life he could not have told you of. I may be a bit knocked about but, in view of past experiences I myself have had, there are certain matters regarding which I could not possibly be deceived. Why, from my recollection of that horrid disaster on Monday there stands out above all the rest of the details a certain phase of it which absolutely convinced me of this: Brissot, at some time or another, must have had intimate acquaintance with African wild life—with the language of a certain very remote tribe—with matters that one could learn only at first hand, on the spot."

Mr. Tyree bent forward. There was a curious intent look, almost a startled look, on his face.

"Colonel," he said, "would you please tell me in detail exactly what happened—with particular reference to these—these disclosures which, you say, aroused your—*hum*—suspicion?"

"There isn't so much to tell. There we were, and yonder was that cursed engine coming down upon us. Here I sat, penned up in that confounded coop of a car, and alongside me was Brissot, and there, just directly in front of us, was the chauffeur, who all at once seemed to have gone quite mad from fright and was screaming out most horribly. You see, we all three of us had sufficient time for apprehending what was about to happen. In a time like that things may pass in a flash—but you see them all, and if you live through it you remember them afterwards."

"We even had opportunity for making a move to get out of the car. I don't say we could have succeeded, any of us, but at least there was an appreciable time for trying."

"No use, though! The chauffeur seemed to be entangled in his steering wheel. And the car door on my side of the car was caught. We'd noticed that morning before we left Brissot's place that the lock was jammed and wouldn't work. On the running board upon the other side—the side from which the locomotive was coming—my luggage had been piled up and tied on after we got in. So there we were, you see, all three of us practically prisoners and quite helpless."

"Poor Brissot did his best. He seized the door handle on his side and he turned it and tried to shove his way out. But his head was all he succeeded in getting entirely out. I figure my larger kit bag—"



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Pioneer Builders of Valve-in-Head Motor Cars Branches in All Principal Cities - Dealers Everywhere

Smoking the peace pipe in wartime

As any ex-doughboy will tell you, a thousand tons of tobacco distributed over a fighting force of 2,000,000 men showed good intentions, but it didn't fill the need—not by a few million pipefuls.

Even today letters still come in from veterans who have forgotten the horrors of war and remember only the thrill of "a real American smoke" in France.

For one, Hugh Livingstone, Adjutant of Yankee Division Post, No. 272, V.F.W., remembers:

Providence, R. I.
Larus & Brother Co.,
Richmond, Va.

My introduction to Edgeworth took place over in the training area in France under circumstances that left a lasting impression of the good qualities of Edgeworth.

One night, after a hard day's work, my bunkie drew a package from home, one of those mysterious affairs that might contain everything but what you wanted.

After due ceremonies of guessing he opened it and the first thing we saw was the blue box of Edgeworth. All further operations ceased until we filled the pipes. After using the French *tabac* for several weeks and burning our mouths and throats to a raw state you can imagine how cool and satisfying that Edgeworth tasted to us.

We smoked until we were ordered to bed, and I fell asleep smoking. You can just bet a letter went home for more Edgeworth.

Since that time I have used about every kind of tobacco that is put up, but it's Edgeworth for me when I can get it. Thank you for putting such a satisfying and cool tobacco on the market.

Gratefully yours,
(Signed) Hugh Livingstone

Probably any good American smoking tobacco would have brought the same joy to Mr. Livingstone and his bunkie in France. But it is a fact that when Edgeworth makes a friend, more often than not it is a lifetime affair.

Edgeworth's one great asset for most smokers is that it is always the same. You can buy a package in Chicago, another in New Orleans, another in San Francisco, and each package will give you the same cool, satisfying smoke.

If you are not an Edgeworth smoker, you are cordially invited to accept some free samples of both Edgeworth Plug Slice and Ready-Rubbed.

Just drop a post card with your name and address to Larus & Brother Company, 61 South 21st Street, Richmond, Va., and the free samples will be forwarded to you immediately. If you will also include the name and address of your tobacco dealer, your courtesy will be appreciated.

To Retail Tobacco Merchants: If your jobber cannot supply you with Edgeworth, Larus & Brother Company will gladly send you prepaid by parcel post a one- or two-dozen carton of any size of Edgeworth Plug Slice or Ready-Rubbed for the same price you would pay the jobber.



it was quite heavy, really—must have slumped down or slipped forward in some way just at that instant—possibly his sudden push at the door shifted it—for the door was forced directly back again, pinching Brissot by the throat so that he stuck fast, as though his neck were locked in a vise; and there he stayed, poor chap, like one set in a pillory, unable to move either way and directly facing his doom until the blow came.

"I recall the entire thing very clearly, even though it all happened in much less time than I require now to tell you of it. It was as though I had one eye for Brissot's hideous plight and one for the chauffeur's state and an extra one for watching that engine approach and for calculating, by its speed, how long it would be before we were struck. Somehow my interest in myself was semi-detached, as you might say—I'd made up my mind already that I, for one, had no earthly chance to escape. I've noticed the same thing before in emergencies that might be called comparable to this one.

"And it was just then, at that precise moment, while poor Brissot's head was held so tightly, that he cried out the words which made me know he had been where, in my time, I have been—away up the interior, well on toward the Uganda district. As he uttered them I too, in spite of all else, was struck by the same paralleling fact which, through some abnormal, spasmodic trick of memory, must have driven itself then and there right into his brain. It was a curious freak; probably one of these psychological sharps could explain it. I can't. I only

know that I also was impressed, even in the one brief instant and under those circumstances, by the graphic resemblance which that locomotive, rushing straight at us, snorting and grinding and tooting, bore to a bull rhino charging, as the brute always does, with its head down and its belly hugging the earth."

"Do you actually mean to say he called out the word *rhinoceros*?"

"Yes and no; the thing was more remarkable even than if he had used the English word. What he exclaimed—shrieked, rather—was a phrase of two native words. The very looks of that approaching monster must vividly have brought those words back to him now, years and years perhaps after he first heard them used, no doubt under somewhat similar conditions.

"He cried out—not once but three times—'*Niama tumba! Niama tumba! Niama tumba!*' just so. And that is from the language of the Mbama, a tribe now almost extinct, who live beyond the country of the Masai on the inner side of our British Protectorate in what was formerly Portuguese East Africa. There are only a few of them left—the slave trade first and the white man's diseases afterwards, long ago decimated them. The words, literally translated, mean 'great animal'—and that's the Mbamas' only name for the bull rhino. Extraordinary coincidence, I call it—if one may speak in such a sense of such a thing's being coincidence."

Mr. Tyree made no answer. For a bit he sat like a man stunned by an incredible tale of an incredible manifestation.

If you want a chuckle that will start at the soles of your feet and ripple through the last hair in your head, don't miss Irvin Cobb's October story

Love and Learn

(Continued from page 73)

"The reward doesn't attract me," says Thurston coolly. "You do—which is why I am here instead of idiotically dashing around hunting the thief like that fool Murphy. Another thing, my dear girl, I never take a case because of a reward. That is for amateurs. If the hotel or Miss Monkton wishes my services in recovering her necklace, they may be obtained at any time on my usual terms."

"Fair enough," I says. "But personally, I wouldn't have your services in anything on any terms. I think you're the bunk, I do for a fact!"

Thurston smiled, but with his lips only. His eyes looked stiletos at me, really!

Well, Jerry Murphy's attempts to make a name for himself as a thief-catcher will be remembered at the St. Moe for many a year. For a week Jerry was busier than an epileptic bill-poster on a windy day, and at the end of that time he hadn't found Abigail's necklace, but he *had* lost his job! He sent Abby right up in flames with personal questions as to how she lost the necklace, suspected everybody in the hotel as the robber, gave the indignant guests the third degree till in forty-eight hours sixty cash customers had checked out of our hostelry foaming at the mouth, busted into the rooms at all hours of the

day and night hunting clues, finger-printed the entire staff and all the guests who would stand for it, and at one time or another tried to pinch the entire ship's company at the St. Moe.

Thurston seemed to get more unholy fun out of Jerry's clowning than anyone in the hotel, and the way this big goof baited Jeremiah was positively brutal. He'd wink at me and call our light-brained house detective aside, filling him full of crazy suggestions for catching Abigail's burglar, and where anybody else would have run Thurston bow-legged, the awed Jerry eagerly followed these tips with the result that he was in hot water as often as steam is.

About this time Miss Abigail Monkton, the elderly charmer of a thousand surprises, sprung a fresh sensation. Three or four weeks after her necklace disappeared, she stopped at the switchboard one day all excited.

"Have they found your necklace yet?" I asked her for the 'steenth time.

"No!" says Abigail, with a grimace that threatened her facial enamel. "My dear, I'm positively disgusted with the police and that impossible Murphy creature. Positively dis-gus-ted! Beyond subjecting me to imbecilic and insulting cross-examinations, they have done nothing.

A Twin Complexion Treatment

IT is hard to think of the sun and the wind as injurious influences; yet to the delicate skin of the refined woman neither is an unmixed blessing.

Both sunburn and windburn are drying, roughening, and coarsening to the complexion; while the dust that accompanies wind tends to clog the pores.

Pompeian Day Cream is a harmless preparation of exquisite fineness made to protect the skin during the activities of the day from exposure to the elements.

Not Entirely Oilless

Unlike some "disappearing" creams, Pompeian Day Cream is not entirely oilless; on the contrary, it contains just sufficient oil to make it desirable for naturally dry as well as for normal or oily skins, and to offset the drying effects of sun and wind.



Restoration by Night, with Pompeian Night Cream

To all appearances Pompeian Day Cream vanishes upon application; it actually leaves an invisible film on the skin which serves as a protection against weather; furthermore, this soft, dull film eliminates and prevents shine and makes a powder foundation to which Pompeian Beauty Powder will adhere evenly and smoothly for a long time.

The sleeping hours may be made a period of benefit or of harm to the



Protection by Day, with Pompeian Day Cream

complexion, according to whether the skin is properly prepared for natural restoration or carelessly left to the heavy hand of time.

If a woman retires with her pores filled with the dust and grime of the day, with her skin dried and roughened, wrinkled by mental concentration or worry, then the night hours will serve to perpetuate these faults.

How to Keep the Skin in Condition

But if she will follow the simple night treatment recommended she can clear the pores, soften and soothe the skin, relax the facial muscles, subdue the wrinkles, and nourish the underlying tissues.

First, a cleansing with Pompeian Night Cream, then a second application gently smoothed into the pores, and she is ready to let the great restorer, "balmy sleep," repair the ravages of the day.

The Twin Treatment

The twin complexion treatment of Pompeian Day Cream and Pompeian Night Cream provides the two essentials of day-time protection and night-time restoration. If faithfully used, these two preparations alone will enable any woman to greatly prolong her hold on a youthful complexion.

POMPEIAN NIGHT CREAM (New style jar) 60c per jar
POMPEIAN DAY CREAM.....60c per jar
POMPEIAN FRAGRANCE.....25c a can

POMPEIAN BEAUTY POWDER...60c per box
POMPEIAN BLOOM (the rouge)...60c per box
POMPEIAN LIP STICK.....25c each

Mary Pickford Panel and Samples

Send the coupon with ten cents for beautiful new 1923 Pompeian Art Panel of Mary Pickford. With this panel we send samples of Pompeian Night Cream, Day Cream, Beauty Powder, and Bloom.

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Your Skin Needs Special Care in the Autumn

By MME. JEANNETTE

As a rule a woman is in her best health with the beginning of the autumn.

But how about her skin?

Frequently she is aware that she has been negligent in her care of it during the lazy months of summer.

I have said it before, and I will continue to say, "Consistency is the virtue in caring for your skin." You are nourishing its tissues; and it is very like your body—you can't eat a surfeit of good food for a week and then forget to eat for the week that follows! Yet you do this when you use complexion creams only part of the time.

At Night—

Soap and water is the habitual way of most women in cleansing the skin; but Pompeian Night Cream is, in many cases, more thoroughly cleansing.

Pompeian Night Cream may be used as lavishly as the individual user desires; there is no such thing as using too much, but enough should be used to cover every part and feature of the face, as well as the neck and the arms, if they too would be kept in beautiful condition.

I do not advise too much rubbing and massaging—just enough to thoroughly distribute the cream. When you remove it with a soft cloth, all dirt and dinginess is also removed, leaving your skin soft and smooth and lovely to the touch.

In the Morning—

In the morning you will find that the night treatment has prepared your skin to gratefully accept an application of Pompeian Day Cream. This is a foundation cream for the day's powder and rouge, and it is a protection to the skin as well.

Then the Powder—

If the autumn finds the skin still somewhat darker than usual, you should use a darker tint of powder than you customarily do. Pompeian Beauty Powder in the Rachel tint may be used on naturally fair complexions until care has restored their own delicate pinks and white tones, when one may again use the White or Flesh shades.

Cover the face and neck well with the powder, and then dust it off lightly and evenly, moistening the eyebrows, eyelashes, and lips to remove any traces of powder from them.

Mme. Jeannette

Specialiste en Beauté

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Gentlemen: I enclose 10c (a dime preferred) for 1923 Art Panel of Mary Pickford and the four samples named in offer.

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Don't confuse ScotTissue Towels with harsh, non-absorbent paper towels. Remember, it isn't Thirsty Fibre unless it bears the name ScotTissue.

Instantly - Thoroughly - Safely

Each fresh, soft, white ScotTissue Towel you reach for contains millions of Thirsty Fibres that jump at your touch—that suck up all trace of clinging moisture from your hands—and leave a feeling of refreshing cleanliness.

It's so surprisingly easy and economical to enjoy this clean, wholesome ScotTissue Towel Service in your office. It's such a comfort to know that there is a fresh, dry, never-before-used towel waiting every time you need a towel.

Whether you buy towels for your personal use or whether you buy them in large quantities for the use of others, you will find ScotTissue prices as attractive as you find the towels comfortable and pleasant to use.

Send us your order or write us for prices per carton of 150 towels or per case of 25 cartons (3750 towels). Less in larger quantities of 5, 10 and 25 case shipments. If you need fixtures, we have them moderately priced to meet all requirements.

Scott Paper Company, Chester, Pa.
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Scot Tissue Towels

for "Clean Hands in Business"

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S. P. Co.

Ab-so-lute-ly nothing! But s-s-sh! May I trust you not to repeat something?"

"I keep a mean secret!" I says.

"Well," says Abigail smilingly, "I have engaged Mr. Thurston to catch the thief and solve the mystery of my missing necklace. What do you think of that?"

"I don't think you could have engaged anyone who knows more about it!" I says, with deliberate significance.

Abby checks a smile, frowns and looks at me queerly. "Just what do you mean by that remark?"

"Why—er—I mean—er—I think Mr. Thurston is just the man to cope with a mystery of this kind," I told her, covering up. "But he's quite expensive, isn't he?"

This time Abigail's face was just the background for a large, happy grin.

"Mr. Thurston's services are not costing me a penny!" she simpers. "Not one penny. You see—I—we—oh, congratulate me, girly, we're engaged!"

Good night!

"Do you actually mean to tell me that big—er—that Mr. Thurston has proposed marriage to you?" I asked, in a faint voice.

Abigail saw that I was a bit upset over the news, but she misguessed the reason.

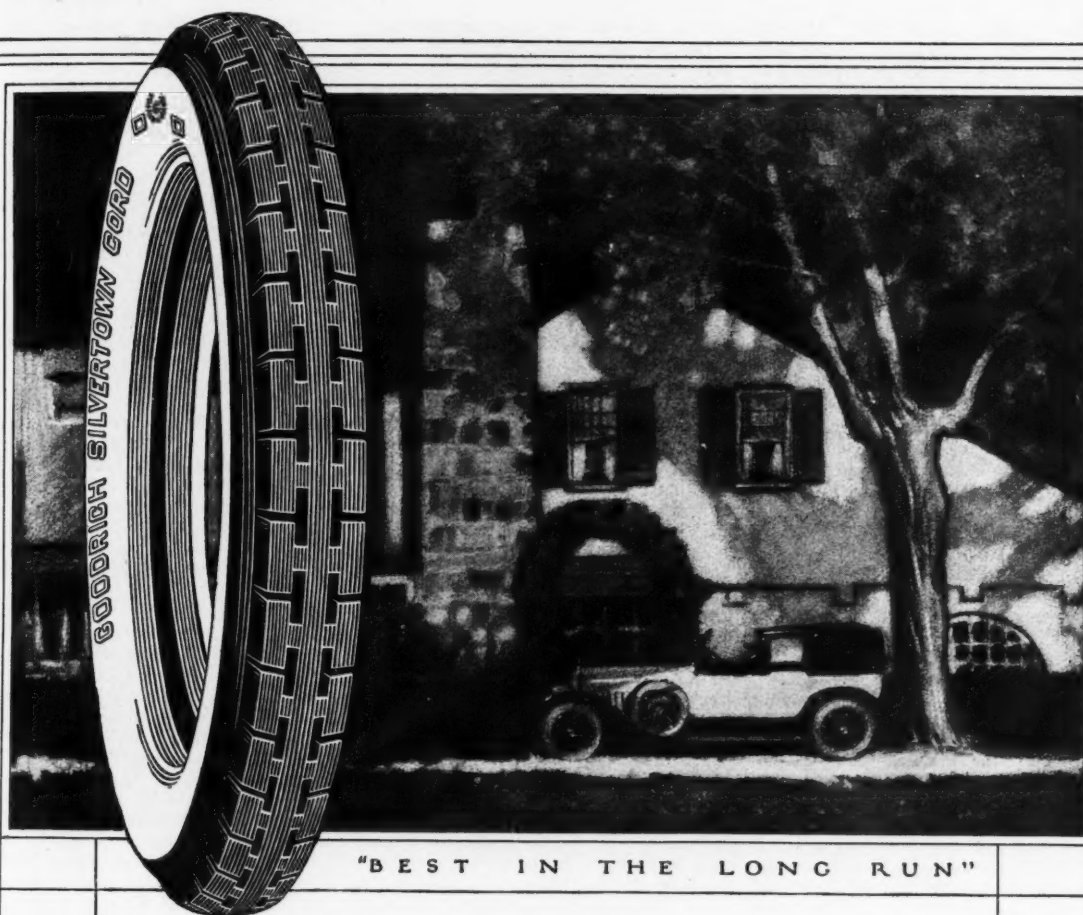
"There, there—don't be downcast, dearie," she says soothingly. "I know all you girls must have had fond hopes in Oliver's direction, he's so thrillingly handsome and clever, isn't he? But cheer up, maybe some other Oliver will come along and—who knows?"

I felt like telling her you could get Oliver Thurston for a dime a dozen and that I'd think that price exorbitant. I wanted to warn her that this patent-leather haired, sleek young vulture was a type as familiar to me as the subway and that I gave his superiors the air every day. But what would be the use? Already filled with the maniacal idea that every girl in the hotel was jealous of her charms, putting in the rap for Thurston would only make her more in love with him than ever and less in love with me. So as it's a hobby of mine to use my head for more than a hat rest, I kept my little mouth shut and let nature take its course!

But as for this Thurston Don Juan—well, honestly, I was simply furious at him! The very idea of his trying to take me out when all the time he was scheming to marry this silly old maid for her doubloons! The more I thought matters over the more I was determined to punish this fellow, and that brought me around to thinking of Abigail's robbery. All of a sudden I made up my mind to solve the mystery of the missing necklace myself! That ten thousand dollars' reward would make at least one of my daytime dreams come true, and at the same time I could help Jerry Murphy come back.

Having been rubbed off the payroll by the disgusted hotel management, poor Jerry was forlornly hanging around outside the St. Moe like a lost sheep. Well, I decided that I'd help him regain his job and former glory by giving him a chance to steal the private detective's thunder. Having that all settled in my mind, I smoothed back my hair and went to work. Then the fun began!

The first thing was to find out what, if anything, Thurston had discovered in the way of clues pointing to who stole the necklace, so I began alternately flirting with him and riding him hard on his failure



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to show some results. But Abigail's boy friend was so madly infatuated with himself that he accepted my attention as no more than his due, and when I switched to sarcasm it rolled off his egotism like water off an oilskin. Finally, however, he began to respond to treatment, and one day he point blankly declared he had solved the mystery. He made that interesting statement with so little of his usual bluster that somehow I instantly believed him.

"Who's the thief?" I asked excitedly.

Thurston smiled mysteriously.

"Ah!" he says, "that will indeed surprise you, my dear girl. So will the solution of this unusual case. I expect to make an arrest within twenty-four hours, and when I do—well, to say you will be astonished would be making a most conservative statement!"

"Yes, yes—go on!" I begged. "If you don't tell me who stole that costly bauble from Abigail's alabaster neck, I'll perish of excitement!" And really I was no more than half kidding, at that.

"I wouldn't have you perish for worlds," says Thurston, leaning over the board. "But it's much too long and too interesting a tale to relate here and now. Dine with me tonight and I promise you a story as fascinating as yourself!"

I know that curiosity killed the cat, but I am no cat and here was the chance I had played for. I promptly said I'd go and the sudden glitter in Thurston's eyes actually made me shiver!

When I went off duty at five that afternoon, the disconsolate Jerry was parked outside with the doorman as usual. I called a taxi and told Jerry to get in it with me, and although our ex-house detective looked plenty puzzled, he leaped inside with astonishing speed. Jeremiah started right in making love to me where he'd left off before, but I quickly stopped that part of it and told him where I was going, why I was going and what I wanted him to do. With the dumb, unquestioning obedience of those born to obey orders, Jerry placed himself at my commands. He had the pawn ticket for the tuxedo he'd been compelled to wear when on night duty at the St. Moe, and when we reached my flat I staked him to twenty-five dollars and sent him home to climb into the tux after letting a barber have his way with his face and hair. Then I bribed Hazel Killian to dress and accompany Jerry to the Palais, where Thurston was taking me to eat, drink and be merry. Thurston had never met Hazel and I figured if there was a girl with Jerry when Thurston saw him at another table, he wouldn't be unduly suspicious.

I put on my war paint, had my blonde tresses dressed, arrayed myself in my most daring—and *only*—evening gown and sat down to wait for Mr. Oliver Thurston with about the same delightful anticipation that a spider watches the approach of a nice fat fly! Promptly at seven o'clock he appeared, and the soft whistle that accompanied the gleam in his eyes showed me that the time I had devoted to readying myself had not been wasted.

Although I liked him and measles the same way, I had to admit that Thurston in evening dress was no eye-irritant. It seemed to me that his cheeks were somewhat flushed and he was more talkative than usual, burning me up by acting as if I belonged to him from the time he arrived

to the time we sat down in the Palais.

On the way to our table we passed Jerry and Hazel, but, as instructed, they didn't give us a tumble. Thurston saw them, however, and sneered.

"Where does that gil rate a snapper like that?" he says, nodding to the beautiful Hazel at Jerry's table. "He's as out of place here as a celluloid suit would be in Hades!"

Honestly, I was so surprised by his language that for a moment I didn't do anything but stare at him! Around the hotel his English had been painfully correct; now, with a half silly grin on his flushed face and an unusual brightness in his eyes, he was as coarse and slangy as a bellhop.

After we ordered and Thurston drives me wild with embarrassment by loudly browbeating the waiter, I asked him who stole Abigail's necklace.

"All in good time, sweetie!" he says, leering at me. "All in good time. First we'll have a little snifter!"

With that he yanks a silver flask out of his hip pocket and pours me a generous drink, in spite of my protests. I didn't argue with him about it, as I didn't want to attract too much attention, but I *did* want Thurston to talk so I didn't object to him tossing off the swallow he had poured for me and another one, too. These two stiff jolts on top of what he'd already inhaled loosened him up considerably. His suave, polished, affected manner just melted away like fried ice and his real self came to the surface.

He scarcely touched his food, but lolled back in his chair looking me up and down and telling me over and over again what a knockout I was. I wanted to murder him, but I let him rave on in the hope of hearing about Abigail's necklace, though his language and manner got rougher and rougher. He spoke of Jerry as a "dick," mentioned "harness bulls," referred to lawyers as "mouthpieces" and Sing Sing as "the big house." A strange premonition was slowly creeping over me and I listened to him with palpitating heart and bated breath. Then out of a clear sky came the fireworks!

Pawing across the table, Thurston managed to get hold of my hand.

"Listen here, beautiful," he says thickly. "Forget about that job of yours at the St. Moe. You got too much stuff to be answering phone calls at that trap, get me? S'pose you answer *my* calls for a while. I got important money and I'm going to get plenty more. I'll take you to Europe, and, girlie, we'll go places! I'll cover every inch of you with a jewel, show you some towns that would make New York look like Oshkosh, give you twice whatever you ask for! Will you play?"

I don't know what stopped me from slapping his face—I've done it for much less than that!

"What about Abigail Monkton?" I asked him, turning my face away so he couldn't see my disgust.

Thurston looked puzzled for an instant and then he threw back his head and laughed so uproariously that heads turned in our direction from near-by tables. I caught Jerry Murphy's inquiring eye and signaled him to be ready!

"Abigail Monkton, eh?" says Thurston, wiping his eyes and then pouring himself

another drink, "Well, sweetie, that dame is about the softest thing I've ever met up with in a mighty soft world! She's double cuckoo over your little boy friend and I'm all set to glom her rocks and do a vanishing act. I got that dizzy old maid jumping through hoops, no kidding! Why, she thinks I'm going to marry her, can you feature that?" He lowers his voice and leans over the table. "Listen, kid," he whispers. "She's got five hundred grand worth of jewelry that I can put my hands on tonight, and before she'd ever peg me we could be in Monte Carlo! When that dough runs out, we'll breeze over to London and I'll grab another Abigail. The world's full of that kind of dames, kid, just full of 'em, and there's never a chance of a pinch because they can't stand the exposure themselves, get me? I'll give you a square deal, sweetie, 'll—why, say, I'd even marry you, if you insisted on it, that's how you got me jazzed up! Don't worry about Abigail making a squawk, either, she won't dare. Why, I took one of these female saps down the line in Nice about two years ago and—"

Too full of Scotch to read the expression on my face, Thurston rattled on, boasting of his disgusting adventures with these silly old women while I listened speechless and wide-eyed, absolutely hypnotized with amazement and contempt! He was no private detective, but a professional criminal of a particularly loathsome type.

Finally I got up enough nerve to ask him if he was the one who stole Abigail's necklace. This brought more laughs from my charming vis-à-vis.

"No, sweetness," he says, "I haven't nailed that—yet! *She never lost it*, what d'ye think of that? I told you I'd surprise you, didn't I? Well, get this—the old fool is crazy to see her name in the papers, so she frames up that robbery story. Then I was to solve the 'mystery' and she thought we'd get married, see? That would make a first-class romance from a newspaper angle—'Weds Sleuth Who Recovers Stolen Heirloom!' Can't you see the headlines?"

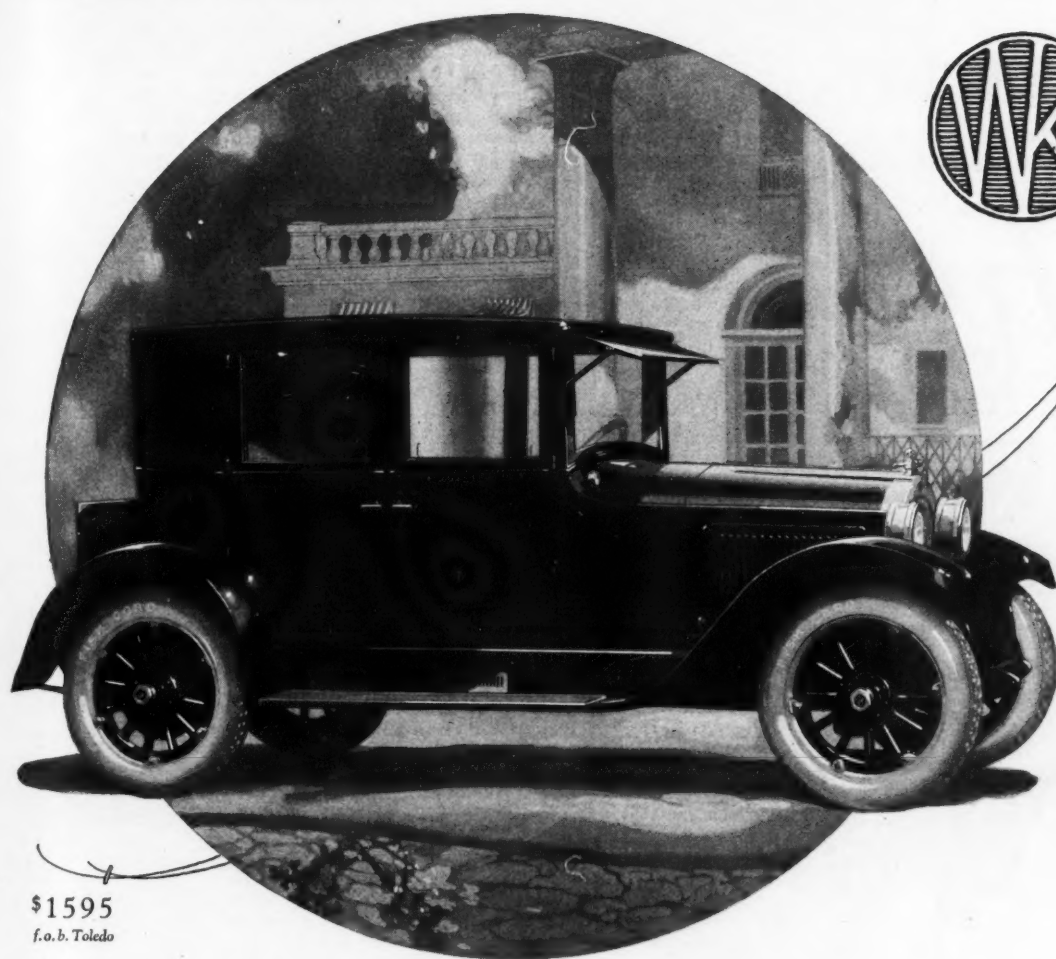
I had seen and heard enough—plenty! I stood up and called to the waiting Jerry, who came on the run.

"Arrest him, Jerry," I panted. "He's not a detective, he's a thief!"

When Jerry gruffly told this Sir Galahad he was pinched, really, I thought for a moment Thurston was going to knock me down, and I felt very faint and scared, but I held my ground. He seemed suddenly fairly sobered up by the shock as he glared at me ferociously and muttered something about "a woman and booze" having licked him. Jerry hustled him outside so quickly that only those right around us had even a hazy idea of what it was all about.

Once out in the clean open air, the somewhat puzzled Jerry asked me what was next on the program. Thurston had bragged about being an amateur champion boxer once, but a look at the grim-faced, scowling Jerry seemed to quell any ambitions he might have had to do any boxing right then! Calling a taxi, I told the chauffeur to drive to the nearest police station and Thurston laughed wickedly.

"Go ahead," he sneers. "You have nothing on me—not a single solitary



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thing! All you'll do is make your friend Abigail the laughing stock of New York, because if they hold me I'll spill everything, get me? That story about her pretending she was robbed will look nice in print and make the Hotel St. Moe crazy about her, *won't it?*"

Well, honestly, this gave me something to think about. After all, poor Abigail was one of my own sex. A silly old woman? Sure! But to me there was tragedy in the thing, too. I didn't fancy the job of letting the whole world know what a fool she had been—maybe there was another way out of the mess. Anyhow, I decided to leave Thurston's fate to her, so I rapped on the window and told the chauffeur to turn around and drive to the Hotel St. Moe.

The gorgeously attired Abigail's face was the playground of many emotions as we all stalked solemnly into her suite, telling her maid to stay outside. I wasted no time in preliminaries, but told my story at once. I left out nothing, hating myself as I saw ten more years add themselves to her drawn features as she listened in stony silence. Jerry stopped Thurston's first interruption by hurling him into a chair, and there our villain sat in sneering quiet till I finished. The moment I stopped talking, however, he sprang to his feet and denied everything, telling Abigail I had made up my entire story out of jealousy because he had thrown me over for her!

Honestly, this astonishing statement and the cool way Thurston made it dumfounded me for a moment, and Abigail seemed to read my silence and the dazed expression on my face as an admission of guilt. She looked daggers at me and Thurston smiled triumphantly, stepping quickly to her side. But it was the usually slow thinking Jerry Murphy who came to my rescue and ruined Mr. Thurston. Jerry stepped forward, yanked out a brutal looking automatic and grabbed Thurston's arm.

"You and me is goin' down to Headquarters, fellah!" growls Jerry. "It's against the rules in this man's town to poisonate a dick. Maybe after they finger-print you and look up your Bertillon down there they'll want you to stick around for a while! Are you comin' quiet, or do you want me to bend this gun over your head? Makes no difference to me."

Thurston got real pale and stared from Abigail to Jerry's set face. From there his frightened gaze fell upon me and I curled my lip at him, turning away in scorn. Then the phoney detective looked longingly at the windows—but we were twelve stories up! Suddenly he shook Jerry off and faced Abigail.

"All right, I'm licked!" he blurts out. "This woman has told you the truth!" He looks at me and his lips draw away from his flashing teeth. "If I had laid off the booze you'd never got hep to me in a million years, with all your smartness. As for this fellow here"—he nods contemptuously at Jerry—"he's a joke, that's all, a laugh! Well, now you got me, what are you going to do with me? It's a cinch Miss Monkton don't want me pinched. She don't want me to tell my story to the reporters, you can gamble on that

part of it! Suppose we call it a stand-off and I'll duck the hotel. Fair enough?"

Really, it seemed a terrible crime to let this fellow walk out scot-free after all he'd done and tried to do to Abigail, yet that appeared to be the only thing to be done if she was to be spared the ridicule of the newspapers. However, the stunned Abigail, who had loved and learned, showed unexpected spirit at this critical point. She took a long, searching look at me—a look that began at the top of my blonde hair, traveled slowly over me to the tips of my slippers and then went back again to my face. There was a kind of wistful admiration in her tired eyes. Then she walked over to the mirror and stared at her own aged and haggard reflection for a lengthy moment. There wasn't a sound in the room!

Abigail let forth a sigh that must have come from her very heels and slowly opened one of the windows. She looked so tragic and resigned I felt sure she was going to jump and I started over to her with Jerry, who had the same idea. But Abby waved us back with a queer smile, as if reading our minds. Bang! Out of the open window goes wig, beauty clay, rouge, powder, chin straps—everything for that schoolgirl complexion and the skin you love to touch. Off comes rings and bracelets and into a drawer with them. Next she snatches up a towel and vigorously rubs all the paint off her face, finally standing before us a plain, wrinkled, gray-haired, disillusioned old woman, but there's a fiery sparkle in her rather nice eyes.

"That's that!" she says, in a firm voice that broke the unnatural silence. "I am finished masquerading—quite finished!" She looked at Thurston, who grinned callously at her, and a bit of natural color flushed her wan cheeks. "As for this contemptible creature who threatens me with ridicule if he is arrested—well, arrest him! I hope he gets a life sentence! Let him tell what he pleases, and I would like to see a metropolitan newspaper print any reflection on me without proof!"

I ran over and threw my arms around her, and, darn it, I was the one to burst into tears!

"This way to the hoosegow!" says Jerry to Thurston. "Make it snappy!"

"You little, double-crossing—" hisses Thurston at me.

"Ah!" roars Jerry, smacking his lips. "I been waitin' patiently for you to crack somethin', you yegg!"

Sock! Scrunch! Biff! . . . And Mr. Oliver Thurston instantly became unhandsome, undignified and unconscious.

At police headquarters they welcomed him later with open cells, quickly identifying him as being wanted in Des Moines, Chicago, Philadelphia and Walla Walla for similar swindles on similar foolish women. Abigail made Jerry and me split the ten thousand reward she had offered for the return of the necklace she never lost, saying we had earned it for exposing Thurston and saving the rest of her jewels. Jerry got back his job at the St. Moe, Abby went to Europe and a pleasant time was had by all.

Except Thurston!

Take 2 parts Wit and 2 parts Wisdom, and you have H. C. Witwer's rollicking story, "King Leary," in COSMOPOLITAN for October, on sale September 10



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Ukridge Sees Her Through

(Continued from page 109)

despair. But there was good stuff in this woman.

She rallied gamely.

"A press ticket?" she murmured.

"A press ticket," I echoed.

"May I see it?"

"Certainly."

"Thank you."

"Not at all."

She passed on.

I resumed my inspection of the dancers with a lighter heart. In my present uplifted mood they did not appear so bad as they had a few minutes back. Some of them, quite a few of them, looked almost human. The floor was fuller now, and whether owing to my imagination or not the atmosphere seemed to have taken on a certain cheeriness. The old suggestion of a funeral still lingered, but now it was possible to think of it as a less formal, rather jollier funeral. I began to be glad that I had come.

"Excuse me!"

I had thought that I was finished with this sort of thing for the evening, and I turned with a little impatience. It was a refined tenor voice that had addressed me, and it was a refined tenor-looking man whom I saw. He was young and fattish, with a Jovian coiffure and pince-nez attached to a black cord.

"Pardon me," said this young man, "but are you a member of the Pen and Ink Club?"

My momentary annoyance vanished, for it suddenly occurred to me that, looked at in the proper light, it was really extremely flattering, this staunch refusal on the part of these people to entertain the belief that I could be one of them.

"No, thank Heaven," I replied.

"Then what—"

"Press ticket," I explained.

"Press ticket? What paper?"

"Society."

There was nothing of the Julia Ukridge spirit in this young man, no ingrained pride which kept him aloof and outwardly indifferent. He beamed like the rising sun. He grasped my arm and kneaded it. He gamboled about me like a young lamb in the springtime.

"My dear fellow," he exclaimed exuberantly, and clutched my arm more firmly lest even now I might elude him. "My dear fellow, I really must apologize. I would not have questioned you, but there are some persons present who were not invited. I met a man only a moment ago who said that he had bought a ticket. Some absurd mistake. There were no tickets for sale. I was about to question him further, but he disappeared into the crowd and I have not seen him since. This is a quite private dance open only to members of the club. Come with me, my dear fellow, and I will give you a few particulars which you may find of use for your article."

He led me resolutely into a small room off the floor, closed the door to prevent escape, and, on the principle on which you rub a cat's paws with butter to induce it to settle down in a new home, began

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to fuss about with whisky and cigarettes.

"Do, do sit down."

I sat down.

"First, about this club. The Pen and Ink Club is the only really exclusive organization of its kind in London. We pride ourselves on the fact. We are to the literary world what Brooks and the Carlton are to the social. Members are elected solely by invitation. Election, in short, you understand, is in the nature of an accolade. We have exactly one hundred members, and we include only those writers who in our opinion possess vision."

"And the big, broad, flexible outlook?"

"I beg your pardon?"

"Nothing."

"The names of most of those here tonight must be very familiar to you."

"I know Miss Ukrigde, the president."

A faint, almost imperceptible shadow passed over the stout young man's face.

"Ah, yes," he said, "Julia Ukrigde. A dear soul, but, between ourselves, strictly between ourselves, not a great deal of help in an executive capacity."

"No?"

"No. In confidence, I do all the work. I am the club's secretary. My name, by the way, is Charlton Prout. You may know it?"

He eyed me wistfully, and I felt that something ought to be done about him. He was much too sleek, and he had no right to do his hair like that.

"Of course," I said. "I have read all your books."

"Really?"

"A Shriek in the Night," "Who Killed Jasper Bossom?"—all of them."

He stiffened austerely.

"You must be confusing me with some other—ah—writer," he said. "My work is on somewhat different lines. The reviewers usually describe the sort of thing I do as pastels in prose. My best liked book, I believe, is 'Gray Myrtles.' If you think it would interest your readers, I will send you a photograph. Possibly your editor would like to use it."

"I bet he would."

"A photograph somehow seems to—as it were—set off an article of this kind."

"That," I replied cordially, "is what it doesn't do nothing else but."

"And you won't forget—'Gray Myrtles.' Well, if you have finished your cigarette, we might be returning to the ballroom. These people rather rely on me to keep things going, you know."

A burst of music greeted us as he opened the door, and even in that first moment I had an odd feeling that it sounded different. That tinny sound had gone from it. And as we debouched from behind a potted palm and came in sight of the floor I realized why.

The floor was full. It was crammed, jammed and overflowing. Where couples had moved as single spies, they were now in battalions. The place was alive with noise and laughter. These people might, as my companion had said, be relying on him to keep things going, but they seemed to have been getting along uncommonly well in his absence. I paused and surveyed the mob in astonishment.

"I thought you said the Pen and Ink Club had only a hundred members."

The secretary was fumbling for his glasses. He had an almost Ukrigde-like knack of dropping his pince-nez in moments of emotion. "It—it is," he stammered.

"Well, reading from left to right, I make it nearer seven hundred."

"I cannot understand it."

"Perhaps they have been having a new election and letting in some writers without vision," I suggested.

I was aware of Miss Ukrigde bearing down upon us, bristling. "Mr. Prout!"

The talented young author of "Gray Myrtles" leaped convulsively.

"Yes, Miss Ukrigde?"

"Who are all these people?"

"I—I don't know," said the talented young man.

"You don't know! It's your business to know. You are the secretary of the club. I suggest that you find out as quickly as possible who they are and what they imagine they are doing here."

The goaded secretary had something of the air of a man leading a forlorn hope and his ears had turned bright pink, but he went at it bravely. A serene looking young fellow with a light mustache and a made-up tie was passing, and he sprang upon him like a stoutish leopard.

"Excuse me, sir."

"Eh?"

"Will you kindly—would you mind—pardon me if I ask—"

"What are you doing here?" demanded Miss Ukrigde curtly, cutting in on his floundering with a masterful impatience. "How do you come to be at this dance?"

The man seemed surprised. "Who, me?" he said. "I came with the rest of 'em."

"What do you mean, the rest of them?"

"The members of the Warner's Stores Social and Outing Club."

"But this is the dance of the Pen and Ink Club," bleated Mr. Prout.

"Some mistake," said the other confidently. "It's a bloomer of some kind. Here," he added, beckoning to a portly gentleman of middle age who was bustling by, "you'd better have a talk with our hon. sec. He'll know. Mr. Biggs, this gentleman seems to think there's been some mistake about this dance."

Mr. Biggs stopped, looked and listened. Seen at close range, he had a forceful, determined air. I liked his looks.

"May I introduce Mr. Charlton Prout," I said. "Author of 'Gray Myrtles.' Mr. Prout," I went on, as this seemed to make little or no sensation, "is the secretary of the Pen and Ink Club."

"I'm the secretary of the Warner's Stores Social and Outing Club," said Mr. Biggs. The two secretaries eyed each other warily, like two dogs.

"But what are you doing here?" moaned Mr. Prout in a voice like the wind in the tree tops. "This is a private dance."

"Nothing of the kind," said Mr. Biggs resolutely. "I personally bought tickets for all my members."

"But there were no tickets for sale. The dance was for the exclusive—"

"It's perfectly evident that you have come to the wrong hall or chosen the wrong evening," snapped Miss Ukrigde, abruptly superseding Mr. Prout in the supreme command. I did not blame her for feeling

a little impatient. The secretary was handling the campaign very feebly.

The man behind the Warner's Stores Social and Outing Club cocked a polite but belligerent eye at this new enemy. I liked his looks more than ever. This was a man who would fight it out on these lines if it took all summer.

"I have not the honor of this lady's acquaintance," he said smoothly, but with a gradually reddening eye. The Biggses, that eye seemed to say, were loath to war upon women, but if the women asked for it they could be men of iron, ruthless.

"Might I ask who this lady is?"

"This is our president."

"Happy to meet you, ma'am."

"Miss Ukrigde," added Mr. Prout.

The name appeared to strike a chord in Mr. Biggs. A gleam of triumph came into his eyes. "Ukrigde, did you say?"

"Miss Julia Ukrigde."

"Then it's all right," said Mr. Biggs briskly. "There's been no mistake. I bought our tickets from a gentleman named Ukrigde. I got seven hundred at five bob apiece, reduction for taking a quantity and ten percent discount for cash. If Mr. Ukrigde acted contrary to instructions, it's too late to remedy the matter now. You should have made it clear to him what you wanted him to do before he went and did it."

And with this extremely sound sentiment the honorary secretary of the Warner's Stores Social and Outing Club turned on the heel of his shining dancing pump and was gone. And I, too, sauntered away. There seemed nothing to keep me. As I went, I looked over my shoulder. The author of "Gray Myrtles" appeared to be entering upon the opening stages of what promised to be a painful tête-à-tête. My heart bled for him.

"Oh, it just came to me, laddie," said Stanley Featherstonehaugh Ukrigde modestly, interviewed later by our representative. "You know me. One moment mind a blank, then—bing!—some dashed colossal idea. It was your showing me that ticket for the dance that set me thinking. And I happened to meet a bloke in a pub who worked in Warner's Stores. Nice fellow with a fair amount of pimples. Told me their Social and Outing Club was working up for its semi-annual beano. One thing led to another, I got him to introduce me to the hon. sec., and we came to terms. I liked the man, laddie. Great treat to meet a bloke with a good, level business head. We settled the details in no time . . .

"Well, I don't mind telling you, Corky my boy, that at last for the first time in many years I begin to see my way clear. I've got a bit of capital now. After sending poor little Dora her hundred, I shall have at least fifty quid left over. Fifty quid! My dear old son, you may take it from me that there's no limit—absolutely no limit—to what I can accomplish with fifty o'goblins in my kick. From now on I see my way clear. The world, laddie, is my oyster. Nothing can stop me from making a colossal fortune. Why, by a year from now I calculate at a conservative estimate . . ."

Our representative then withdrew.

More matter for laugh-lovers to gloat over will be furnished by Mr. Wodehouse in the next adventure of Ukrigde—told in October COSMOPOLITAN



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The Lone Wolf Returns

(Continued from page 104)

misleading light. Lanyard, traversing an unknown terrain, with nothing but impatient memories of Morpew's rough sketch-map to guide him, threw caution to the very wind and shouldered headlong through hedges, coppices and thickets. His prayer, indeed, was that chance might throw him into personal collision with his enemy.

From that moment when, after dinner, Morpew had first broached his mind on this foray and Lanyard had taken the tacit implication that he might refuse to play his part appointed only by dedicating himself to an early and a wasted end, he had been determined to find some means—and the fouler the fitter—of coercing Morpew into keeping him company step by step and sharing whatever fate would be his in the outcome.

From the moment when his hand had closed upon the grip of the pistol which he had talked Morpew into trusting him with, he had felt fondly confident, not that he would escape with his life, but that Morpew shouldn't.

Now to find his plan anticipated infected Lanyard with a kind of madness; he was a man-killer in intention as he blundered through the dark, he had fixed in mind a solitary thought, to be in time to abort the proposed burglary by taking Morpew's life. The penalty for that would be so little to pay for vindication of himself to himself—to Eve; the tale would surely find its way to her, some day.

He found himself finally at check on the fringe of a black spinney, peering across a lawn at a pale, columned façade.

The dwelling seemed to be fast asleep. In the intervening open nothing human moved; if Morpew and his lot were about, they were keeping to good cover.

The Lone Wolf in his day would have picked his way toward the house from shadow to shadow, like an Indian stalking his kill; the Lanyard of that night struck straight away across the lawns at the top of his speed. The worst that could reward such audacity would be an attempt to overhaul or intercept him, in which event there would be gun-play sure to give the alarm; better the hazard of that than to lose precious minutes trying to avoid being seen, thereby granting the thief in the house the time he needed.

For the thief was in the house already; Lanyard's first cast across the lawns at the wing that held the library had been repaid by discovery of a lancing play of light beyond the windows, the thin, restless blade of an electric torch in hands either cynically indifferent to detection, or absurdly amateurish.

He would be in time—perhaps. If so, with none to spare. He pelted madly toward the veranda, took its steps at a stride and, with calculated intent to make all the noise he could, battered a shoulder like a ram against the joint in the middle of the nearest window.

It gave with an ease he hadn't discounted, its wings flew open with a sounding crash; and tripping on the sill Lanyard tumbled in on all fours, while the walls bellowed with the report of a pistol, and broken glass showered about him.

Instantly he reared up on his knees, as a man will when mortally hit, flopped to

one side, out of that too exposed position in front of the window, and lay very still, his own pistol ready, his vision probing the obscurity for some sign of stir.

The electric torch defeated that effort. It had been dropped with switch set, and now lay at some distance in from the windows, its beam steadfast to the front of an opened safe; manufacturing a wide patch of vivid color that made the encompassing mirk more dense, too dense for penetration by merely mortal eyes. Lanyard, at least, could see nothing else; and though he distinctly heard the pile of a rug whisper to a movement of sly feet, it passed his perceptions to determine the quarter in which that rustle had its rise. It ceased presently, and he heard nothing more, other than the swish and flap of the curtain in the shattered window.

The burglar hadn't left by way of any window, he was certain; therefore was still in the room, waiting like Lanyard for some incautious sign to guide his aim. But to play a waiting game with him would be intolerable, and too apt, as well, to end in precisely that which Lanyard was bent on preventing, the intrusion of some member of the household to draw the marauder's fire. The raving of the wind in the trees made it impossible to distinguish lesser sounds from beyond those four walls; but it was hardly conceivable that the rending racket with which the window had admitted Lanyard, the shot that had followed, and that loud rain of splintered glass, should have failed to alarm every inmate of the house.

Lanyard conjured up to the eye of his mind the plot of the library he had studied at Morpew's instance. According to it the window he had broken through was the one nearest a wall in which (close by Lanyard's head, it ought to be) a double doorway opened in from the main hall of the house, with a switch for the ceiling light conveniently at hand.

Gathering himself together, Lanyard rose in a reckless bound and lunged blindly toward the door, found it where he had thought it ought to be, and began to grope for the switch.

His first fumbblings were wide of their mark, but he persevered, heart in mouth, expecting every moment to see the black backwards of the room stabbed by a jet of crimson and orange flame. But the other held his fire, no doubt shrewdly guessing what Lanyard was up to and reckoning it the part of wisdom to wait for the light to make his aim sure.

Lanyard's fingers at length hit on the switch, a great central chandelier sprayed the room with radiance.

Lanyard occupied it alone, at least seemed to; the library was over-furnished with huge old-fashioned pieces, any one of which might easily have been serving the safe-breaker as a temporary screen, from behind any one of which Lanyard had to look for his *coup de grâce* to come at any instant . . . Or, he dared not be unmindful, that might come through one of the windows. Doubt of his temper could now no longer exist in Morpew's intelligence. The one slender chance Lanyard had of eluding a bullet lay in keeping constantly on the move.

He quartered the library with swift strides, bent almost double, zigzagging from the shelter of one article of furniture to that of the next, and finding the other man nowhere. In this manner he circled a massive table of oak and was passing the violated safe when the toe of one boot struck something that incontinently, in effect, came to life, and slithered across the hardwood like a serpent of light.

Involuntarily Lanyard pulled up, stooped and retrieved the thing: a diamond necklace of all but inestimable worth.

His breath stuck in his throat, his heart stood still, his consciousness was in an instant sponged clear of every other thought than this: he knew that necklace, knew it almost as well as he knew the palm of his hand, and knew it had no business being where he found it, three thousand miles and more from the home of its owner in the south of France.

Like a man in hypnosis, without taking his eyes from the necklace Lanyard stood up, put his pistol down upon the table and used both hands to straighten out the string of blue-white stones and hold them to the light.

Veritably Eve's . . .

Unaware of any noise of warning, again like the subject of a hypnotist, he slowly turned his head and saw Eve standing in the doorway, a vision of loveliness unflawed by any fault, supremely gracious of line and warm of color in that austere frame, beauty stricken by sorrow.

One hand held the door knob, the other at her bosom clutched together folds of the gossamer robe she had thrown over her shoulders on getting out of bed. Her lips, barely parted, were silent, her unswerving look was dark with amazement and reproach.

Twenty seconds tolled by thunders wore out of Lanyard's ken; he remained, like Eve, transfixed, his eyes mirroring in some small part his mind's stark disarray . . . reading in hers sick contempt to see him standing there, caught red-handed at the Lone Wolf's base business, the man she had given all her trust and love to surprised in the act of thieving the jewels of the woman he had professed to adore.

And then wonderfully she moved, advanced a pace or two out of the doorway, and lifted to him hands of charity and suppliance, her countenance mild and kind for him, that voice of sweetness incomparable tenderly fluting one word of entreaty, his name: "Michael!"

Existing then only in her love and in the love he bore her, forgetting all else in life, Lanyard came to himself in trembling and stumbled toward her hands . . .

It was the swift change of her expression that halted him, the startled dread that afflicted her as something at his back drew her attention. Galvanized by that hint of peril to his beloved, Lanyard whirled. But the cry of angry challenge that rose to his lips was audible only as a broken rattle, he was instantaneously stricken to futility to find himself confronted by Michael Lanyard, his living apparition.

It was like a trick of delirium, a phantom parody of Lanyard materialized from behind a huge wing chair beyond the far end of the table; his counterfeit in every



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particular of dress and feature, his facsimile grotesquely forged.

One look recognized the likeness and its fraudulence; that is to say, assured Lanyard that he wasn't confronting a mirror. A gleam of grim joy shone on his features. He covered in a leap half the distance between them, saw a pistol in the grasp of the impostor swing point blank to his head, ducked before it spat. His own weapon was out of his reach, but the string of diamonds in his hand licked out from it like a whiplash of white flame and fell squarely across the other's eyes. A second shot went wild as the man's head jerked back from the stinging impact of the stones. Lanyard was at his throat.

The sheer fury of his onslaught bore both back to the wing chair and over its legs as it toppled and fell on its side. The pinned wrist of the hand that held the pistol was twisted with such cunning that the fingers relaxed, the weapon described a flashing arc through the air, dropped to the polished floor and slid a dozen feet away from the combatants. Even more to the purpose, when that writhing tangle of bodies resolved itself, Lanyard was on top. But the under dog rallied with the fury of one fighting for his very life and rained brutal blows on Lanyard's face. Indifferent to these, Lanyard dug both thumbs into the fellow's throat and slowly but savagely choked him.

He lay still at length, gagging and wheezing, tongue protruding, eyes starting from their orbits. And Lanyard released his pressure on the windpipe only to twine vindictive fingers into the hair of his victim and tug for glory and the saints—till a wig and false forehead *en bloc* came away in his grasp.

After that it was the work of half a minute to snatch a handkerchief from a breast pocket, scrub off most of that mask of grease paint, and bring to light glimpses of the ruined beauty of the dancing yegg.

Eve's shadow fell athwart the two, and Lanyard, for all the laboring of his lungs, had an irrepressible chuckle as he looked up into her bewildered face.

"Permit me to introduce the Lone Wolf's last incarnation!" he cried, and jumped up, brandishing the scalp he had taken—"known to the police and social circles of the cabarets as Henry Mallison—Mally for short!"

CHAPTER XXV

NO RESPONSIVE elation lightened the dark regard that shifted from Lanyard's face to Mallison's and back again, only a smile pitiful and chiding dawned. "So this," Eve slowly said, and slowly shook her head at the man who loved her "is why you ran away?"

That look he could no more interpret than he could the riddle of her words. "I?" he blankly wondered—"ran away—"

She nodded once. "But you didn't know, I'm sure, what you were doing then. You are yourself tonight."

"Yes," he cried, "thank Heaven tonight I am myself . . ."

One of her hands went out to his; he caught it between his own, was drawn by it to her bosom. Common impulse moved them aside and away from the man they had forgotten the man who lay sobbing and fighting for breath on the floor.

"So you come back to me!" It was as if

in the gaze that plunged into her eyes his very soul passed out from him to lose itself in that treasury of love which those eyes disclosed. "So, as I knew you would, you come back to me at last, your honor cleansed! Michael," the woman breathed, yearning to him—"my Michael!"

"What are you telling me? I ran away from you!"

"Three months after you were injured in that motor accident, while your memory still was uncertain, when often you couldn't recall one day's events on the next . . . without a word of explanation or farewell, one day you left me, disappeared . . ."

"Left you!"

"I knew, of course, why . . . It was when the papers were reveling in the sensational 'return'—as they called it—of the Lone Wolf. I had tried to keep it from you, fearing the consequences of the excitement, in your condition; but the hue and cry was out for you, I was at my wit's ends to hide you away from the police, it was necessary to tell you why . . . What I had so feared happened: you brooded incessantly; whenever your mental condition made you forget the affair for a time something was sure to happen to remind you. A hundred times you begged me to let you go, that you might find and expose the scoundrel; I knew you were incompetent for that, at the time, and always managed somehow to talk you out of it, until—as I say—abruptly, without word or sign, you left me."

"Left you!"

"Ah! but you don't know." Her smile grew gently arch, fondly teasing. "Don't you, my Michael! even remember—"

She gave a startled movement, averting her attention to the windows, her body became tense in his embrace, her hands convulsively tightened upon his shoulders.

The veranda was booming with a sudden concerted rush of many feet. Lanyard offered to release the woman, but she clung to him as if in terror, and at the last he had to use his strength, because he foresaw what was to befall, forcibly breaking her hold and throwing her from him lest she share a peril that, he was resolved, must at any cost be his alone.

Crying out, she staggered back; and Lanyard turned toward the desk to retrieve his pistol—too late. Already a man was shouldering in through the broken window. He brought up standing with an automatic trained on Lanyard.

"Stick 'em up, my man!" he rumbled, "and be quick about it."

Lanyard was quick about it. His own weapon lay on the far edge of the desk, at least eight feet away. Hands level with his ears, he swung slowly to face Morpheu.

Gross, ungainly, panting, rocking from one to the other of his heavily planted feet, the Sultan of Loot stood with head slightly lowered and thrust forward, face of a pig hideously twisted by a leer of malice successful and exultant.

Behind him the window filled with followers, through it half a dozen defiled into the room; after these, the inevitable Pagan, smirking; finally, two that were new figures in Lanyard's sight—one a young Irishman in local police uniform, the other a simple citizen proudly parading a nickel-plated badge of some sort.

"And keep 'em up, Lanyard!" Morpheu was admonishing in an uglier note of malice. "Don't take any chances with me

this time—if I have to shoot, I'll shoot to kill. You're caught at last, caught with the goods on!"

"Caught?" Eve de Montalais challenged. She stepped forward, coming between Morpheu and his prey. "What are you saying? Caught doing what?"

A mottled fat paw impatiently waved her out of the way; Morpheu's dourest scowl covered her. "Stand aside, madam!" he growled. "Don't make me take a chance of hitting you; that man's a desperate criminal, if you don't know it; the first move he makes, I'll fire—"

"But I do not know he is a desperate criminal," Eve sharply contradicted. "As for you, whoever you may be, I think you must be mad . . ."

"I guess you are," Morpheu brusquely retorted. Yet his slotted eyes winced from hers. "Caught him yourself—didn't you?—just now, robbing your safe—"

"And if I did?" the woman surprisingly quibbled. "What concern is that of yours? Have I invited your interference? Have I asked your help in the management of my own affairs?"

"Maybe you haven't," Morpheu sullenly contended, "but you're getting it whether you want it or not—"

"With what authority, pray?"

"My authority, madam!" the man retorted in open rage; "the authority of an honest, law-abiding citizen. I've been after that yegg there for months. Now I've got him, by Heaven! he don't escape with his life." He jerked a peremptory head at the policeman and the man who sported the nickel-plated badge. "Take your prisoner, Mr. Sheriff—"

"One moment!" Eve interposed a ringing demand that halted these two. "I am the householder here—you'll arrest nobody on these premises without my sanction or a proper warrant. This gentleman has done nothing to deserve arrest—"

"Nothing?" Morpheu jeered. "You call burglary nothing?"

"He has committed no burglary—"

"Didn't break into this room and bust open that safe, I suppose?"

"To the contrary," Eve asseverated, "Mr. Lanyard is here in his own right; more than that, he has prevented a burglary—"

"A likely story!" Morpheu commented with a snort of grim derision. "If he didn't do it, I want to know who did!"

"But allow me to answer this honest and law-abiding citizen, madame," Lanyard lightly put in. And wittingly at risk of his life he lowered one hand to touch the woman's shoulder as he moved to one side, that she might no longer persist in shielding him with her own body. "Permit me to relieve the confusion which distresses Monsieur Morpheu—"

"You keep your trap shut!"

"Softly, my good Morpheu! I am about to do you a service—appreciating as I do how worried you have been, and how pained, by the ungrateful behavior of your tool and accomplice, Mal—"

"Shut your mouth, d'you hear?" belowered Morpheu, swaying his huge head upon his shoulders like an infuriated animal about to charge. "Take your prisoner, Mr. Sheriff! If this woman won't charge him with the burglary he's committed here tonight, I charge him with breaking into my house in New York last night—"

The bellow ran out in a gasp that was



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followed by a choking sound. A long arm had shot out over Morphew's shoulder from behind, and the bony but powerful hand at the end of it had closed upon his wrist, jerking the muzzle of the pistol toward the ceiling. As he swung round with an incoherent roar another hand, the mate to the first, deftly seized the weapon and twisted it from his grasp. He stared, in apoplectic speechlessness, into the countenance, composed yet sardonic, of Crane.

Unobserved by anybody other than Eve and Lanyard, the detective had quietly stepped in through the open window, closely followed by an associate, a mild-mannered body hall-marked police detective by the derby hat of tradition.

"Y'oughtn't to get gay like that with loaded firearms," Crane counseled in gently pained reproach. "Y'ought to know better, a man your age!" His mouth hardened and he clamped fingers like the jaws of a vise on Morphew's shoulder, nipping truculent bluster in its bud. "Crane's my name, if you want to know, but bull's my nature, Mister Morphew; and remember this"—eyes that had the glint of steel between narrowed lids cowed Morphew's—"I don't ask no better luck than for you to give me a good excuse to get even with you for all the trouble you've been putting me to. Keep a civil tongue in your head if you value your health."

Morphew cast glances mutely eloquent with tormented appeal to his henchmen; but they were one and all inattentive, to a man preoccupied with the attitude of Crane's associate. And yet the mild-mannered man was doing nothing more than mildly keeping mild eyes on them and his hands in his overcoat pockets. It is true that both the said pockets boasted singular bulges, as if two forefingers of derision were being pointed under their cover.

"But what the—who the—what right've you—!" Morphew stammered.

"Well!" Crane chuckled, "I don't know. Kind of thought I'd drop in and see how your little frame-up was working. Got the hottest kind of a tip half an hour ago . . . Give you three guesses where it came from." His thin-lipped mouth widened in an unkind smile. "Never mind guessing, Morphy; spare the old intellect the strain. Here she comes now . . ."

A vision of elfin fantasy, with a fur-trimmed opera wrap of crimson and gold brocade negligently draped over her *deshabille*, Folly McFee airily sauntered in from the veranda and paused and posed, reviewing the tableau with glances of mischievous amusement.

"Why, Morphy!" in affected solicitude she cried, "whatever has happened? You look fussed to a perfect frazzle . . ."

"Best little side-kick any guy ever worked with," Crane quite seriously affirmed. "Take it from me, Morph old boy, I'll look a long ways before I find another little lady like that, who won't even stick at letting her name be linked with the name of a mongrel like you, just to get the low-down on your naughty little ways and shoot the information along."

A shove, seemingly playful and effortless, nevertheless shook the balance of that hulking body; Morphew staggered back a step or two, regained physical equilibrium with some effort, and braced himself like a badgered brute in a bull pen, feet wide

apart, head swaying low upon hunched and rocking shoulders.

Lanyard, watchful, ready for anything now that Crane had deprived Morphew of his pistol, told himself he had never seen a man more nearly out of his mind with fury, had never encountered at close quarters an animal more dangerous.

"But will you kindly look who's here!" Crane's happy drawl was hailing—"as I live, old Hank Mallison, the spring-heeled yegg, none other!"

Only his mild-mannered colleague had no attention to spare for the spectacle of Mallison, like a specter in a pantomime, slowly and laboriously, with the help of hands that clutched the desk, hoisting himself into view.

"Folks!" Crane solemnly declared, "I'm an officer of the law and everything, but this is one big night. It ain't every night a poor dumb dick like me is privileged to gaze upon the only authentic pirated copy of the Lone Wolf. So if I can only wheedle our friend here, the King of the Bootleggers, into selling me a bottle of his best bootliquor, the drinks are on me all round!"

On his feet at length, Mallison rested, trembling visibly. In a face that retained recognizable traces of his make-up as the Lone Wolf, his eyes had something of the bewildered look of a beaten dog's—but for the merest instant only; terror replaced it in a twinkling when his puzzled, questing glance discovered the presence of Morphew.

There was an instant then that was gravid with presentiments of tragedy, in which no one spoke, no one moved in any way but Morphew.

Morphew was crouching lower, gathering himself together. The hands that had been hanging limp lifted and tensed into the likeness of great livid claws that itched for Mallison's throat. Morphew's lips had rolled back from his teeth, from deep in his gullet a dull, brutish growl was rising. Of a sudden it waxed to an inhuman howl, and simultaneously that ponderous bulk of flesh launched itself like a thunderbolt incarnate across the room . . .

In its third stride it was stopped and thrown back as if it had dashed itself against an invisible barrier. Mallison had found Lanyard's pistol and fired. He fired again as Morphew was falling. But his third shot ploughed the ceiling. Lanyard had gone into action while the first report was still a noise of deafening reverberations in the room; resting his hands upon the top of the desk, he vaulted it, his feet striking Mallison's chest. The man went down with Lanyard on top of him . . .

CHAPTER XXVI

"SIMPLE enough," Crane opined, "like all these funny little games crooks frame up, once you locate the chink that gives you a look in at the machinery."

He stood in the main doorway. Behind him the wind-swept sky was dull gray with the dusk of a new day. On the drive, at the foot of the veranda steps, a motor-car was waiting, Pagan and Mallison on the back seat with the mild-mannered man, the left wrist of the latter handcuffed to the right of the dancing yegg. Another car that could be seen in the distance was carrying away Morphew's henchmen under guard, in the wake of an ambulance that had arrived just in time to receive the lifeless body of the Sultan of Loot.

"If crooks could think straight they might make good, once in every so often; but they can't, that's why we call 'em crooks; and that's why everything they cook up and make such a mystery of is so blame' silly and childish when you come to take it to pieces. Here's Morphew, the biggest frog in his pond, going off his nut with jealousy because the little McFee lady liked Lanyard a whole lot better'n him, and getting Mallison to play Lone Wolf and pull off a couple of jobs so's Mrs. McFee would see what a sap she'd been, falling for a so-called reformed crook. And here's Mallison getting chesty because he's pulling off Lone Wolf stuff to the queen's taste, and giving Morphew the double-cross—which was plain suicidal mania, if you ask me—and trying to go on with the game on his own. And then there's the Delorme woman, kidnaping Lanyard while he wasn't mentally responsible, with the fool notion, as near's a body can figure it, she could make him believe he belonged to her and had gone wrong again, so the only thing for them to do was to team up and collect a handsome living from the world at large . . ."

He smiled a vaguely pitying smile at nothing in particular. "These things wouldn't ever happen," he concluded, "if all crooks weren't crazy . . . Well! time I was on my way." He bent with unexpected courtliness over Eve's hand, and shook Lanyard's. "The top of the morning to you, madam. So long, Lanyard—we won't say good by—the best of luck!"

The tires crunched loudly on the cracked stone of the driveway, the high wind raved about the house and sougled through the tossing limbs of trees; but between Eve and Lanyard there was silence, on her part the stillness of tranquil expectancy, on his the dumbness of constraint.

"So it comes true," he said with a bleak smile, "what I foretold in the beginning. Say good by to me, Eve, and let me go."

The hand he offered to take did not move to meet his. "Where will you go?" she quietly inquired.

"Back to England," he said in a sigh, "I suppose—as soon as I can get in touch with the secret service and request my recall. That is, if they'll have me again, after their faith in me has been sapped by this business of Mallison."

"That will take a few days at least," she gravely considered. "I shall have plenty of time to wind up my small affairs in this country—I shall be ready, Michael, whenever you wish to go."

He hung his head and shook it wearily. "It is impossible," he said. "Surely you must know now mine isn't a life I can ask the woman I love to share."

"But you love me?"

"You know it."

"And you would leave me?"

"I must."

"Then," she made believe to sigh, "if you insist on having it that way—I can only presume you wish me to divorce you on the grounds of desertion."

"Divorce me!"

She went straightway to his bosom, clung to it in tears and laughter. "Will you ever forgive me—I wonder!—for taking advantage of your helplessness? As soon as possible after that accident, as soon as you were able to walk—we were married!"

THE END

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The Hope of Happiness

(Continued from page 79)

be sorry you didn't just let me freeze to death out there in the boathouse. I told Millie—not another soul knows—not even Connie and Shep. For dada's sake I don't want the family to be disgraced—and I guess it wouldn't have looked pretty for me to be found dead in a queer place like that.

Please forgive me for always being a bother to you—that's the third time you've seen me that way. Don't let Millie perish of loneliness while I'm gone. You know she likes you—she's the grandest girl there is on this earth—and you mustn't be haughty and upstage with her. I think she's more than a little hurt that you never go to see her. Thank you loads, and be sure I'll never forget. I wish you were my big brother; I'd just adore being a nice good little sister to you. Love and kisses from
Leila

He reread it a dozen times in the course of the evening. It was so like the child, perverse, generous, affectionate, that Leila was. "*I wish you were my big brother.*" The sentence had slipped from her flying pen thoughtlessly, no doubt, but it gave Bruce a twinge. Shep did not know; Leila did not know; and yet for both of these children of Franklin Mills he felt a fondness that was beyond ordinary friendship. Either would have been happier if they had not been born into the Mills caste. The Mills money and the Mills position were a burden against which more or less consciously they were in rebellion.

It was ten days later that a communication from the Laconia War Memorial Association gave warning that the stipulations for the contesting architects were being altered, and in another week Bruce received the supplemental data sent out to all the contestants. The amount to be expended had been doubled by an unexpected addition to the subscriptions.

In one of his first fits of homesickness Bruce had subscribed for the Laconia Examiner. The paper printed with a proud flourish the news of the augmentation of the memorial fund. "An unknown donor" had given \$100,000 through a New York trust company; "a citizen" whose identity for good and sufficient reasons was not to be disclosed. The trust company's letter as quoted in the Examiner recited that the donation was from "a patriotic American, who, recognizing the fine spirit in which Laconia had undertaken the memorial and the community's desire that it should be an adequate testimony to the valor and sacrifice of American youth, considered it a high privilege to be permitted to assist."

Mills! Bruce did not question it, nor that Mills was doing it for him. The thing was staggering, not because it was a large sum even for a man of Mills's wealth to contribute, but for the reason that alone explained it, that Mills wanted to enlarge the scope of the architect's opportunity. Mills wanted him to win and he wanted the success to count.

Bruce found it necessary once more to tear Mills to pieces and reconstruct him. When Connie and Shep, Bud Henderson, Helen Torrence and other persons had analyzed Franklin Mills for his benefit, they hadn't seen the whole man but only obvious qualities, chiefly disagreeable; and

Bruce himself had thought Mills cold, selfish and arrogant. The two hours Mills had spent with him must have done this—warmed to life that old passion, brought Marian Storrs from the dead to become again a factor in his life.

Bruce was living in Laconia again, so engrossed did he become in his work. He dined with Carroll now and then, enjoyed long evenings at the Freemans' and refused so many invitations to the mid-winter functions that Dale protested. He dropped in the trust company now and then to observe Shep in his new rôle of vice-president. Shep was happier in the position than he had expected to be. He had charge of the savings department and was pleased when his old friends among the employees of the battery plant looked him up and opened accounts.

While Bruce might bury himself from the sight of others who had manifested a friendly interest in him, Helen Torrence was not so easily to be denied. She had no intention of going alone to the February play of the dramatic club; she telephoned Bruce he must dine with her that evening and take her to the club. Bud had already sent him an admission card with a warning not to come if anything better offered, such as sitting up with a corpse—this being Bud's manner of speaking of the organization whose entertainments he would not have missed for a chance to dine with royalty.

Bruce, having reached the Torrence house, found Millicent there. "You see what you get for being good!" cried Helen, noting the surprise and pleasure in his face as he walked into her drawing room.

"I thought maybe you'd run when you saw me," said Millicent. "You passed me right in front of the post-office yesterday and looked straight over my head. I never felt so small in my life."

"Post-office?" Bruce repeated. "I haven't been near the place for weeks!"

"That will do from you!" said Helen. "We all thought you'd be a real addition to our sad social efforts here, but it's evident you don't like us."

"Any more scolding, Millicent?" Bruce asked. "Let me see—we had arrived at the stage of first names, hadn't we?"

"Yes, Bruce! But after the long separation it might be as well to go back to the beginning. As for scolding, let's consider that we've signed an armistice."

"I don't like the military lingo; it sounds as though there had been war between us."

"Dear me!" Helen interposed mournfully. "You're not going to spend the whole evening in preliminaries! Let's go out to dinner."

After they were seated Bruce was still rather more self-conscious than was comfortable. Nothing had happened; or more truthfully, nothing had happened but that he had been keeping away from Millicent, and this because he was jealous of Franklin Mills. That was the plain truth of the matter, and now that he was in her presence he was ashamed of himself. She evidently was not displeased to see him again. He had not realized how greatly he had missed her till her voice touched



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chords that had vibrated at their first meetings. Her eyes had the same steady light and kindled responsively to any demand of mirth; her hair had the same glint of gold. He marveled anew at her poise and ease. Tonight her gown, of a delicate shade of crimson, seemed a subdued reflection of her bright coloring. Helen boldly called his attention to the gown's becomingness. No one but Millicent would dare so much without appearing to dare, she declared.

"This is dreadful!" Millicent protested. "Please don't talk of me as though I were a dressmaker's model! Call it a pink dress and pass on to the next exhibit."

Bruce floundered badly in his attempts to bring some spirit to the conversation. He felt that he was really acting the fool as he listened with forced attention while Helen and Millicent compared notes on recent social affairs.

"Millie, you don't really like going about—teas and that sort of thing," said Helen. "I know you don't. All you girls who have ideas are like that."

"Oh, please don't think that! I go lots of places!" Millicent protested. "But sometimes there are things I'd rather do than go to parties! Does one really have to keep going to avoid seeming queer?"

"I go because I haven't the brains to do anything else. I like wandering with the herd. People adore you, Millie! If people are shy with you it's because they think you're away above them—their minds, I mean."

"How terrible!" cried Millicent with mock horror. "That's the worst thing that can happen to any girl, for the idea to get abroad that she's cursed with the high and bulging brow. I'm not that kind at all, am I—Bruce?"

There was the lightest ironic flick to the delayed use of his name.

"Decidedly no!" he declared.

"Leila's the only friend I have who really knows me! She knows that cutting out paper dolls is my chief delight."

"Oh, how I envy you!" cried Bruce, who was beginning to find himself. "Will there be an exhibition of your creations? In Leila's absence you might reveal your masterpieces to Helen and me."

"Don't be deceived!" Helen exclaimed. "Millie takes her paper dolls to the sick children in the hospitals. I was at the City Hospital looking up some old ladies for Doctor Lindley the other day and peeped into the children's ward. Much excitement—a vast population of paper dolls dressed in the latest modes. The dear kiddies were so tickled. They said a beautiful lady had brought them. And she was going to come back and show them just how they were made!"

"The darlings! They're such patient little angels," murmured Millicent. "You feel better about all humanity when you see how much courage there is in the world. It's a pretty brave old world after all."

"Isn't that the most remarkable thing there is about life," demanded Bruce. "that so many people rise up every morning bent on doing the best they can, and a little better than their best? You'd think the whole human race would have given up the struggle long ago and jumped into the sea. But no! Poor boobies that we are, we go whistling right along. Silly old world—but not so bad after all."

"Great applause!" exclaimed Helen.



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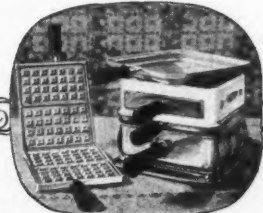
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These were two interesting young people, she knew, and she was anxious to hear their views on matters about which she troubled herself more than most people guessed.

"I've wondered sometimes," Millicent said, "what would happen if the world could be made altogether happy just once by a miracle of some kind, no heartache anywhere! How long would it last?"

"Only till some person among the millions wanted something another one had; that would start the old row over again," Bruce answered.

"I see what you children mean," said Helen seriously. "Selfishness is what makes the world unhappy!"

"Wow! We're getting in deep," Bruce exclaimed. "Millicent always swims for the open water."

"Millie ought to go about lecturing, telling people to be calm, to look more at the stars and less at their neighbors' new automobiles. I believe that would do a lot of good," said Helen.

"A splendid idea!" exclaimed Bruce, laughing into Millicent's eyes. "But what a sacrifice of herself!"

"I'd be stoned to death," said Millicent, "if I told people to pull down the shades and not see the neighbor's new car."

"You'd be surer of martyrdom if you told them to love their neighbors as themselves," said Helen. "Seriously now, that's the hardest thing there is to do! Why, on one side my neighbor's children snowball my windows; on the other side there's a chimney that keeps me poor paying cleaner's bills. Perhaps you'd speak to them for me, Millie."

"See here!" exclaimed Millicent, "where do you get this idea of using me as a missionary and policeman! I don't feel any urge to reform the world!"

"All right," said Bruce with a sigh of resignation. "Let the world go hang, then, if you won't save it."

Helen was dressing the salad, and Bruce was free to watch Millicent's eyes as they filled with dreams. As at other times when some grave mood touched her, it seemed that she became another being, exploring some realm alien to common experience. He glanced at her slender hands, folded quietly on the edge of the table, and again at her dream-filled eyes. Hers was the repose of a nature schooled in serenity. The world might rage in fury about her, but amid the tempest her soul would remain unshaken.

Helen looked up, but stifled an apology for the unconscionable time she was taking with the salad when she saw Millicent's face and Bruce's intent, reverent gaze.

"Saving the world!" Millicent repeated deliberately. "I never quite like the idea. It rather suggests—doesn't it?—that some new machinery or method must be devised for saving it. But the secret came into the world ever so long ago—it was the ideal of beauty. A Beautiful Being died that man might know the secret of happiness. It had to happen that way or man would never have understood or remembered. It's not His fault that His ideas have been so confused and obscured in the centuries since He came. It's man's fault. The very simplicity of His example has always bewildered men; it was too good to be true!"

"But Millie," said Helen, with a little embarrassed laugh, "does the world really want to live as Jesus lived? or would it

admire people who did? Somebody said once that Christianity isn't a failure because it's never been tried. Will it ever be tried—does anyone care enough?"

"Dear me! Have I been talking foolishly again!" Millicent picked up her fork and glanced at them smilingly. "Bruce, don't look so terribly solemn! Why, people are trying it every day, at least pecking at it a little. I've caught you at it lots of times! While we sit here, scores of people are doing things to make the world a better place to live in—safer, kinder and happier. I saw a child walk out of the hospital the other day who'd been carried in, a pitiful little cripple. It was a miracle; and if you'd seen the child's delight and the look in the face of the doctor whose genius did the work, you'd have thought the secret of Jesus is making some headway!"

"And knowing the very charming young woman, named Millicent, who found that little crippled girl and took her to the hospital, I'd have thought a lot more things!" said Helen.

"I never did it!" Millicent replied.

"She's always up to such tricks!" Helen informed Bruce. "Paper dolls are only one item of Millie's good works."

"Be careful!" Millicent admonished. "I could tell some stories on you that might embarrass you terribly."

"How grand it would be if we could all talk about serious things—life, religion and things like that—as Millie does," remarked Helen. "Most people talk of religion as though it were something disgraceful."

"Or they take the professional tone of the undertaker telling a late pallbearer where to sit," Bruce added, "and he is always deaf and insists on getting into the wrong place and sitting on someone's hat."

"How jolly! Anything to cheer up a funeral," said Helen. "Go on, Millie, and talk some more. You're a lot more comforting than Doctor Lindley."

"The Doctor's fine," said Millicent spiritedly. "I don't go to church because half of me is heathen, I suppose." She paused as though a little startled by the confession. "There are things about the churches—some of the hymns, the creed, the attempts to explain the Scriptures—that rub me the wrong way. But it isn't fair to criticize Doctor Lindley or any other minister who's doing the best he can to help the world when the facts and the times are against him. No one has a harder job than a Christian minister of his training and traditions who really knows what's the trouble with the world and the church but is in danger of being burned as a heretic if he says what he thinks."

"People can't believe any more, can they, what their grandfathers believed? It's impossible—with science and everything," suggested Helen vaguely.

"Why should they?" asked Millicent. "I like to believe that God moves forward with the world. He has outgrown His own churches; it's their misfortune that they don't realize it. And Jesus, the Beautiful One, walks through the modern world weighted down with a heavier cross than the one he died on—bigotry, intolerance, hatred—what a cruel thing that men should hate one another in His name! I've wondered sometimes what Jesus must think of all the books that have been written to explain Him—mountains of books! Jesus is the only teacher the

world ever had who got His whole story into one word—a universal word, an easy word to say, and the word that has inspired all the finest deeds of man. He rested His case on that, thinking that anything so simple would never be misunderstood. At the hospital one day I heard a mother say to her child, a tiny girl who was doomed to die, 'I love you so!' and the wise, understanding little baby said, 'Me know you do.' I think that's an answer to the charge that Christianity is passing out. It can't, you see, because it's founded on the one thing in the world that can never die."

The room was very still. The maid, who had been arrested in the serving of the dinner by a gesture from Helen, furtively made the sign of the cross. The candle flames bent to some imperceptible stirring of the quiet air. Bruce experienced a sense of vastness, of the illimitable horizons of Millicent's God and a world through which the Beautiful One wandered still, symbolizing the ineffable word of His gospel that was not for one people, or one sect, not to be bound up into one creed, but written into the hearts of all men as their clue and guide to happiness. It seemed to him that the girl's words were part of some rite of purification that had cleansed and blessed the world.

"I hadn't thought of it in quite that way," said Bruce thoughtfully.

Helen was a wise woman and knew the perils of an anticlimax. She turned and nodded to the maid.

"Please forgive me! I've been holding back the dinner!" Millicent exclaimed. "You must always stop me when I begin riding the clouds. Bruce, are you seeing Dale Freeman these days? Of course you are! Helen, we must study Dale more closely. She knows how to bring Bruce running!"

"I cheerfully yield to Dale in everything," said Helen. "I must watch the time. They promise an unusually good show tonight—three one-act pieces, and one of them by George Whitford; he and Connie are to act in it."

"Connie ought to be a star," Millicent remarked. "She gives a lot of time to theatricals."

"There's just a question whether Connie and George Whitford are not—well, getting up theatricals does make for intimacy!" said Helen. "An idle man—particularly a fascinating devil like George—is a dangerous playmate for a woman like Connie!"

"Oh, but Connie's a dear!" exclaimed Millicent defensively. "Her position isn't easy. A lot of the criticism you hear of her is unjust."

"A lot of the criticism you hear of everybody is unjust," Bruce ventured.

"Oh, we have a few people here who pass for respectable but start all the malicious gossip in town," Helen observed. "They're not all women, either! I suspect Mort Walters of spreading the story that Connie and George are having a big affair, and that Mr. Mills gave Connie a good combing about it before he went abroad."

"Ridiculous!" murmured Millicent.

"Of course," Helen went on. "But Connie ought really to have a care. It's too bad Shep isn't big enough to give Walters a thrashing. The trouble with Mort Walters is that he tried to start a little affair with Connie himself and she turned him down cold. Millie, you hate



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"I didn't want to try Lux at first even though I was sure it would be nice on my hands. It just seemed too extravagant.

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"I suppose I ought to confess that I didn't believe a teaspoonful would give me enough suds for my dishes.

"One day I tried it, more out of curiosity than for any other reason, and I simply was amazed to find that just the one teaspoonful of Lux gave me a good suds.

"A little of it goes so far that I realize now that it is fully as cheap if not cheaper than bar soap!"

"Rough, scratchy fingers"

"I have been using Lux for my dishes for almost six months and I can't help writing to tell you what a difference it *has* made in my hands. My fingers used to be rough and scratchy so that I couldn't bear to touch a piece of silk, indeed *couldn't* touch it without roughing it up—but since I have been using Lux they are just as smooth as can be."

From a man —

A well-known collector of fine old china, glass and silver writes:

"Nothing is worse for china than the action of alkaline soaps. Flowered china, banded dishes (by that I mean colored bands or gold ones), china with delicate or brilliant designs, are faded or tarnished by the chemical action of such soaps.

"For years I have had all

my china, my old glass and silver washed with Lux. It does not fade the pattern—it never scratches fine crystal and glass. It does away with the frequent polishing of my fine old silver."

"Soft on my hands"

"My hands are the sensitive kind. Strong soap plays havoc with them. A friend told me to try washing my dishes in Lux and maybe my hands wouldn't get so rough. I didn't think it would make any difference but I made up my mind to try it as long as the box lasted. I haven't used anything else since. I've never known anything so 'soft' on my hands."

"Speedier than ordinary soap"

"I am a business woman, so time means a great deal to me. I wash the dishes every night to save my mother. One night when we were out of our usual soap, I tried Lux and I've used it ever since. I have never known anything so quick. Lux is much speedier than the old way."

Says our advertising is wrong

"I think you make a mistake telling people that a package of Lux lasts three weeks. I use it regularly for all my dishes and I only use a package a month. Of course there are only three of us in family. Perhaps that is why it lasts longer."

gossip! Please talk about the saints so I won't have a chance to chatter about the sinners."

"Don't worry," said Bruce. "If there were no sinners the saints wouldn't know how good they are."

"We'd better quit on that," said Helen. "It's time to go."

CHAPTER XIII

WHEN they reached the hall they met Shepherd Mills, who confessed that he had been holding four seats in the hope that they'd have pity on him and not let him sit alone.

"I've hardly seen Connie for a week," he said. "This thing of having a wife on the stage is certainly hard on the husband!"

The room was filled to capacity and there were many out of town guests, whom Shep named proudly as though their presence were attributable to the fact that Connie was on the program.

Whitford, in his ample leisure, had been putting new spirit into the club, and the first two of the one-act plays that constituted the bill disclosed new talent and were given with precision and finish. Chief interest, however, lay in the third item of the bill, a short poetic drama written by Whitford himself. The scene, revealed as the curtain rose, was of Whitford's own designing—the battlements of a feudal castle, with a tower rising against a sweep of blue sky. The set transcended anything that the club had seen in its long history and was greeted with a quick outburst of applause. Whitford's name passed over the room, it seemed, in a single admiring whisper.

His piece, "The Beggar," written in blank verse, was dated vaguely in the Middle Ages and the device was one of the oldest known to romance. A lord of high degree is experiencing the time-honored difficulty in persuading his daughter of the desirability of marriage with a noble young knight whose suit she has steadfastly scorned. The castle is threatened; the knight's assistance is imperatively needed; and the arrival of messengers, the anxious concern of the servitors, induce at once an air of tensi-

In the fading afternoon light Constance, as the princess, makes her entrance unconcernedly and greets her distracted lover with light-hearted indifference. She begins recounting a meeting with a beggar minstrel who has beguiled her with his music. She provokingly insists upon singing snatches of his songs to the irritated knight, who grows increasingly uneasy over the danger to the beleaguered castle. As the princess exits the beggar appears and engages the knight in a colloquy, witty and good-humored on the vagrant's part, but marked by the knight's mounting anger. Whitford, handsome, jaunty, assured, even in his rags, with his shrewd retorts evokes continuous laughter.

A renewed alarm calls the knight away, leaving the beggar thrumming his lute. The princess reappears to the dimming of lights and the twinkle in the blue background of the first tremulous star. The beggar, who of course is the enemy prince in disguise, springs forward as she slips out of her cloak and stands forth in a flowing robe of shimmering white. Her interchange with the beggar passes swiftly from surprise, indifference, scorn, to

awakened interest and encouragement.

No theater was ever stilled to an intenser silence. The audacity of it, the folly of it! The pictorial beauty of the scene, any merit it possessed as drama, was lost in the fact that George Whitford was making love to Constance Mills. No make-believe could have simulated the passion of his wooing in the lines that he had written for himself, and no response could have been informed with more tenderness and charm than Constance brought to her part.

Whitford was declaiming:

My flower, my light, my life! I offer thee
Not jingling coin, nor lands, nor palaces,
But yonder stars, and the young moon of spring,
And rosy dawns and purple twilights long,
All singing streams, and their great lord the sea—
With these I'd thee endow.

And Constance, an enthralling picture of young trusting love, replied:

I am a beggar in my heart!
My soul hath need of thee! Teach me thy ways,
And make me partner in thy wanderings,
And lead me to the silver springs of song.
I would be free as thou art, roam the world,
Away from hateful wars, by murmuring streams,
Through green cool woodlands sweet with peace and love . . .
Wilt thou be faithful, wilt thou love me long?

To her tremulous pleading he pledged his fealty, and when he had taken her into his arms and kissed her they exited slowly. As they passed from sight his voice was heard singing as the curtain fell.

The entire cast paraded in response to the vociferous and long continued applause, and Whitford and Constance bowed their acknowledgments together and singly. Cries of "author" detained Whitford for a speech, in which he chaffed himself and promised that in appreciation of their forbearance in allowing him to present so unworthy a trifle, which derived its only value from the intelligence and talent of his associates in presenting it, he would never again tax their patience.

As the lights went up Bruce, turning to his companions, saw that Shepherd was staring at the stage. Helen, too, noticed the tense look in Shep's face, and touched him lightly on the arm. He came to with a start and looked about quickly.

"It was perfectly marvelous, Shep! Connie was never so beautiful, and she did her part wonderfully!"

"Yes; Connie was fine! They were all splendid!" Shep stammered.

"I've seen her in plays before but nothing to match tonight," said Helen. "You'll share her congratulations—it's a great night for the family!"

They had all risen, and Millicent and Bruce added their congratulations—Shep smiling but still a little dazed, his eyes showing that he was thinking back—trying to remember, in the way of one who has passed through an ordeal too swiftly for the memory fully to record it.

"Constance was perfectly adorable!" said Millicent sincerely.

"Yes, yes!" Shep exclaimed. "I had no idea, really. She has acting talent, hasn't she?" The question was not perfunctory; he was eager for their assurance that they had been watching a clever piece of acting.

The room was being cleared for the dancing, and others near-by were shaking hands with Shep and expressing their admiration for his wife. Helen seized a moment to whisper to Bruce:

"It rather knocked him. Be careful that he doesn't run away. George ought to be shot—Heaven knows there's been enough talk already!"

"The only trouble is that they were a little too good, that's all," said Bruce. "That oughtn't to be a sin—when you remember what amateur shows usually are!"

"It's not to laugh!" Helen replied. "Shep's terribly sensitive! He's not so stupid but that he saw that George was enjoying himself making love to Connie."

"Well, who wouldn't enjoy it!" Bruce answered.

The dancing had begun when Constance appeared on the floor. She had achieved a triumph and it may have been that she was just a little frightened now that it was over. As she held court near the stage, smilingly receiving congratulations, she waved to Shep across the crowd.

"Was I so very bad?" she asked Bruce. "I was terribly nervous for fear I'd forget my lines."

"But you didn't! It was the most enthralling half-hour I ever spent. I'm proud to know you!"

"Thank you, Bruce. Do something for me. These people bore me; tell Shep to come and dance with me. Yes—with you afterwards."

Whether it was kindness or contrition that prompted this did not matter. It sufficed that Connie gave her first dance to Shep and that they glided over the floor with every appearance of blissful happiness.

As this was Millicent's first appearance since her election to the club, her sponsors were taking care that she met such of the members as had not previously been within her social range. Franklin Mills's efforts to establish the Hardens had not been unavailing.

Bruce was waiting for his next dance with her and was not greatly interested in what went on about him when Dale Freeman accosted him.

"Just look at the girl—seeing her dancing just like any other perfectly healthy young being, you'd never think she had so many wonderful things in her head and heart. Millie's one of those people who think with their hearts as well as their brains. When you find that combination, sonny, you've got something."

"Um—yes," he assented glumly.

Dale looked up at him and laughed. "I'll begin to suspect you're in love with her now if you act like this."

"The suspicion does me honor!"

"Oh, I'm not going to push you! I did have some idea of helping you but I see it's no use."

"Really, none," he answered soberly. And for a moment the old unhappiness clutched him.

At one o'clock he left the dance with Helen and Millicent.

"I suppose the tongues will wag for a while," Helen sighed wearily. "But you've got to hand it to Constance and George! They certainly put on a good show!"

At the Hardens' Bruce took Millicent's key and unlocked the door.

"I've enjoyed this; it's been fine," she said and put out her hand.



Here they are Sir! the world's most distinguished cigarettes—in a special new size—20 for 30¢



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for your *Luxury Hour*

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after the day's toil,
when every man feels
entitled to taste life's
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New size—plain ends only
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For the connoisseur's taste—
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Famous Pall Mall—the most
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the quality intact, while ma-

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Hence, the new "PALL
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A *trimmer* cigarette than the
Pall Mall Regular—a little
smaller in girth, but with
plain ends *only*—and with
the same exquisite blend of
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Try Pall Mall *Specials* to-
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WEST OF THE ROCKIES 20 for 35¢

"It was a pretty full evening," he replied. "But there's a part of it I've stored away as better than the plays—even better than my dances with you."

"I know!" she said. "Helen's salad!" "Oh, better even than that—the talk at the table—your talk! I must thank you for that!"

"Oh, please forget! I believe I'd rather you'd remember our last dance!"

She laughed light-heartedly and the door closed.

"They've done it now!" exclaimed Helen as the car rolled on. "Why will people be such fools! To think they had to go and let the whole town into the secret!"

"Cease worrying! If they'd really cared anything for each other they couldn't have done it."

"George would—it was just the daredevil sort of thing that George Whitford would do!"

"Well, you're not troubled about me any more!" he laughed. "A little while ago you thought Connie had designs on me. Has it got to be someone?"

"That's exactly it! It's got to be someone with Connie!"

But when he had left her and was driving on to his apartment it was of Millicent he thought, not of Constance or Whitford. It was astonishing how much freer he felt now that the Atlantic rolled between him and Franklin Mills!

Bruce, deeply engrossed in his work, was nevertheless aware that the performance of "The Beggar" had stimulated gossip about Constance Mills and Whitford. Helen Torrence continued to fret about it; Bud Henderson insisted on keeping Bruce apprised of it; Maybelle deplored and Dale Freeman pretended to ignore. The provincial mind must have exercise, and Bruce was both amused and disgusted as he found that the joint appearance of Constance and Whitford in Whitford's one-act play had caused no little perturbation in minds that lacked nobler occupation or were incapable of any very serious thought about anything.

It had become a joke at the University Club that Bruce, who was looked upon as an industrious young man, gave so much time to Shepherd Mills. There was a dog-like fidelity in Shep's devotion that would have been amusing if it hadn't been pathetic. Shep, inspired perhaps by Bruce's example, or to have an excuse for meeting him, had taken up handball. As the winter progressed this brought them together once or twice a week at the Athletic Club. One afternoon in March they had played their game and had their shower and were in the locker room dressing.

Two other men came in a few minutes later and, concealed by the lockers, began talking in low tones. Their voices rose until they were audible over half the room. Bruce began to hear names—first Whitford's, then unmistakably Constance Mills was referred to. Shep raised his head as he caught his wife's name. One of the voices was unmistakably that of Morton Walters. Bruce dropped a shoe to warn the men that they were not alone in the room. But Walters continued, and in a moment a harsh laugh preluded the remark:

"Well, George takes his pleasure where he finds it. But if I were Shep Mills I'd certainly not stand for it."

Shep jumped up and started for the aisle, but Bruce stepped in front of him and walked round to where Walters and a friend Bruce didn't know were standing before their lockers.

"I beg your pardon, Mr. Walters, but may I remind you that this is a gentleman's club?"

"Well, no, you may not!" Walters retorted hotly. He advanced toward Bruce, his eyes blazing wrathfully. The men, half clothed, eyed each other for a moment.

"We don't speak of women in this club as you've been doing," said Bruce. "I'm merely asking you to be a little more careful."

"Oh, you're criticizing my manners, are you?" Walters flared.

"Yes; that's what I'm doing. They're offensive. My opinion of you is that you're a contemptible blackguard."

"Then that for your opinion!"

Walters sprang forward and dealt Bruce a ringing slap in the face. Instantly both had their fists up. Walters's companion grasped him by the arm, begging him to be quiet, but he flung him off and moved toward Bruce aggressively.

They sparred a moment warily; then Walters landed a blow on Bruce's shoulder.

"So you're Mrs. Mills's champion, are you?" Walters sneered.

Intent upon the effect of his words, he dropped his guard. With lightning swiftness Bruce feinted, slapped his adversary squarely across the mouth and followed this with a cracking blow in the jaw that sent him toppling over the bench. His fall made considerable noise, and the superintendent of the club came running in to learn the cause of the disturbance. Walters, quickly on his feet, was now struggling to shake off his friend. Several other men coming in stopped in the aisle and began chaffing Walters, thinking that he and Bruce were engaged in a playful scuffle. Walters, furious that his friend wouldn't release him, began cursing loudly.

"Gentlemen, this won't do!" the superintendent admonished. "We can't have this here."

"Mr. Walters," said Bruce when Walters had been forced to sit down, "if you take my advice you'll mind your tongue more carefully. If you want my address you'll find it in the office."

He went back to Shep, who sat huddled on the bench, his face in his hands. They finished dressing in silence. Walters made no further sign, though he could be heard blustering to his companion while the superintendent hovered about as a precautionary measure.

Shep's limousine was waiting—he made a point of delivering Bruce wherever he might be going after their meetings at the club—and he got into it and sat silent until his house was reached. He hadn't uttered a word; the life seemed to have gone out of him.

Bruce walked with him to the door and said "Good night, Shep" as though nothing had happened. Shep rallied sufficiently to repeat the good night, choking and stammering upon it. Bruce returned to the machine and bade the chauffeur take him home.

He did no work that night. Viewed from any angle, the episode was disagreeable. Walters would continue to talk—no doubt with increased viciousness. Bruce

wasn't sorry he had struck him, but as he thought it over he found that the only satisfaction he derived from the episode was a sense that it was for Shep that he had taken Walters to task. Poor Shep! Bruce wished that he did not so constantly think of Shep in commiserative phrases!

He wished that he was not so constantly, so inevitably, as it seemed, put into the position of aiding and defending the house of Mills.

In spite of this disagreeable business he worked at his plans for the Laconia memorial determinedly and he hoped with inspiration. He looked in at the Hardens' on a Sunday afternoon and found Millicent entertaining several callow youths—new acquaintances whom she had met at the functions to which Mills's cautious but effective propaganda had admitted her. Bruce did not remain long; he thought Millicent was amused by his poorly concealed disappointment at not finding her alone. He made his next venture on a wild March night, and broke forth in a paean of thanksgiving when he found her alone in the library.

"You were deliciously funny when you found me surrounded! Those were nice boys; they'd just discovered me."

"They had the look of determined young fiends; I knew I couldn't stay them out. I dare 'em to leave home on a night like this, though!"

"Oh, I know! You're afraid of competition! After you left Sunday mama brought in ginger cookies and we popped corn and had a grand old time!"

"It sounds exciting. It was food for the spirit I needed; I couldn't have stood it to see them eat."

"Just for that our pantry is closed to you forever—never a cookie! Those boys were vastly pleased when you departed. They knew you as a soldier of the Republic and a crack handball player—not as an eminent architect. That for fame! By the way, you must be up to something mysterious. Dale gave me just a tiny hint that you're working on something prodigious. But of course I don't ask to be let into the secret!"

"The secret's permanent if I fail!" he laughed.

He was conscious that their acquaintance had progressed, in spite of their rare meetings. Tonight she played for him and talked to him from the organ, made a running comment on some old sacred music. Presently he found himself standing beside her; there seemed nothing strange in this—to be standing where he could watch her hands and know the thrill of her smile as she invited his appreciation of some passage that she was particularly enjoying . . .

"That's enough for tonight," she said after a time. "Let's go back to the fire."

"What have you been doing with the clay; I want to know everything."

"Oh, not so much lately. You might like to see some children's heads I've been doing. I bring some of the little convalescents to the house from the hospital to give them a change."

"Lucky kids!" he said. "To be brought here and played with!"

"Why not? They're entitled to all I have as much as I am."

"Revolutionist! Really, Millicent, you must be careful!"



My wife asked me to do this

Now I offer you a new delight—an olive oil shampoo

By V. K. CASSADY, B. S., M. S., Chief Chemist



My wife told me she wished someone would invent a shampoo that would not leave hair dry and brittle. She said all women wanted it. And asked me to try my hand—I am chief chemist at Palmolive.

Now I have one—Olive Oil—as advised by world authorities on hair beauty.

I should esteem it a favor for you to test it. And then to give me your opinion.

A more gentle way

I found that most shampoos were too harsh; that while they cleaned they took the life and lustre from the hair. Scores of women told

me this. And, too, famous specialists of the scalp. So I set out to perfect a thorough cleanser, yet one mild and gentle, which would leave that dainty sheen which adds so to one's charm.

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Thousands of women, many famous beauties, have written me already. They say results are a revelation.

Your hair clean.

The scalp tingling—dandruff free and healthy.

Yet—gleamingly, gloriously alive, immediately after a shampoo!

I think you will thank me for offering this scientific way to you.



PALMOLIVE SHAMPOO

Ever Ride on a Fifth Avenue Bus?

I did. Past the shops with their windows dressed like miniature stage settings. Flashes of color, shining of silver, the butterfly blending of a florist's display, the tropical richness of fruits in their steamer baskets, brilliant peasant embroideries, shimmering silks, the liquid softness of velvets. The sun shining!

And on top of the bus I met a girl. Her eyes were the color of pre-war sherry. Her skin had a "keep that school girl complexion" look. She was more full of pep and sparkle than ginger ale.

And she was thirty-two years old! She had three children who, at last count, were all alive and husky. She fed them spinach three times a week and took them to the dentist every six months. She believed in the Boy Scout movement and the Camp Fire girls. She knew all about Dr. Holt and practiced what he preached. Yet her hand at bridge was not the family skeleton.

"BUT," she said, "I don't intend to let my sons grow up and write memoirs about me in some magazine, at three cents a word, telling what a noble example I left behind me at forty-five. I'm going to write my own memoirs at seventy-five."

And I said to myself, "Three cheers!" And I said to her, "How so?"

Then she told me how she and her Best Beloved like lots of company. It kept them on their toes mentally and it was good training for the children. So they had lots of company and she had a good time planning and cooking for them. She had a good time because she wasn't content with serving meat and potatoes and pie. She liked to think up unusual combinations. She made a game of having her table up to the minute.

She used her head and her imagination to the limit and spared her muscles in proportion.

CRISPY brown breaded veal with tomato sauce full of chopped almonds! Roast duck, crackly skinned and juicy, with slices of orange baked in brown sugar! Bartlett pear salad with the tang of Roquefort cheese and diced celery!

And it all sounded so easy and so delicious the way she told about it. Her face lit up as an artist's does when he is talking of his work. She made my mouth water. And I had just had lunch.

She was thirty-two!

She had three children!

She had lots of company!

She looked twenty-five!

And she gave the credit to her 100% use of her grocery store. She never prepared anything that some food manufacturer had already cooked better for her.

THREE meals a day hadn't run off with her youth and enthusiasm and joy in living.

I think she was a smart woman. And a good mother.

Even if she preferred to write her own memoirs at seventy-five.

Menu making and food preparation are part of your job too. So I am sure you will find enjoyment and interest in the three booklets listed below. They include many unusual and out of the ordinary menus and recipes. And your own particular meal getting problems! Write me and let me offer suggestions for those. That's what I'm here for.

1. Menus from Packages.
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Yes; no matter how little he saw of her, their amity and concord strengthened. Sometimes she looked at him in a way that quickened his heartbeat. As they went down from the organ his hand touched hers and it thrilled him. A high privilege, this, to be near her, to be admitted to the sanctuary of her mind and heart. She had her clichés; *harmony* was a word she used frequently, and colors and musical terms she employed with odd little meanings of her own.

In the studio she showed him a plaque of her mother's head which he knew to be creditable work. His praise of it pleased her. She had none of the amateur's simpering affectation and false modesty. She said frankly she thought it the best thing she had done.

"I know mama—all her expressions—and that makes a difference. You've got to see under the flesh—get the inner light even in clay. I might really get somewhere if I gave up everything else," she said pensively.

"Yes; you could go far. Why not?"

"Oh, but I'd have to give up too much. I like life—being among people; and I have my father and mother. I think I'll go on just as I am. If I got too serious about it I might be less good than now, when I play at it . . ."

In their new familiarity he made bold to lift the coverings of some of her work that she thought unworthy of display.

She became gay over some of her failures, as she called them. She didn't throw them away because they kept her humble.

On a table in a corner of the room stood a bust covered with a cloth.

"Another *magnum opus*?" he asked carelessly.

She lifted the cloth and stood away from it. "Mr. Mills gave me some sittings. But this is my greatest fizzle of all; I simply couldn't get him!"

The features of Franklin Mills had been reproduced in the clay with mechanical fidelity; but unquestionably something was lacking. He studied it seriously, puzzled by its deficiencies.

"Maybe you can tell me what's wrong," she said. "It's curious that a thing can come so close and fail."

"It's a true thing," remarked Bruce, "as far as it goes. But you're right; there's something that isn't there. If you don't mind, it's dead; there's—there's no life in it."

Millicent touched the clay here and there, suggesting points where the difficulty might lie. She was so intent that she failed to see the changing expression on Bruce's face. He had ceased to think of the clay image; Mills himself had been in the studio, probably many times. The thought of this stirred the jealousy in Bruce's heart—Millicent and Mills! Every kind and generous thought he had ever entertained for the man was obliterated

by this evidence that for many hours he had been there with Millicent. But she, understanding nothing of this, was startled when he flung round at her.

"I think I can tell you what's the matter," he said in a tone harsh and strained. "The fault's not yours!"

"No?" she questioned wonderingly.

"The man has no soul," he said, as though he were pronouncing sentence of death.

That Millicent should have fashioned this counterfeit of Mills, animated perhaps by an interest that might quicken to love, was intolerable. Passion possessed him. He lifted the bust and flung it with a loud crash upon the tile floor. He stared dully at the scattered fragments.

"God!" He turned toward her with the hunger of love in his eyes. "I—I—I'm sorry—I didn't mean to do that!"

He caught her hand roughly, then gently released it, and ran up the steps into the living room.

Millicent remained quite still till the outer door had closed upon him. She looked down at the broken pieces of the bust, trying to relate them to the cause of his sudden wrath. Then she knelt and began mechanically, patiently, picking up the fragments. She paused suddenly. Her hands relaxed and the bits of clay fell to the floor. She stood up tall and straight; her head lifted and a light came into her eyes.

Here, you will agree, is a situation with big dramatic possibilities; and Meredith Nicholson develops them to the full in his powerful conclusion next month

The Garbageman's Daughter

(Continued from page 35)

Ronald stood his ground.

"S my friend," he said bluffly. "Her name's Carlotta—and gee, you oughta see her fight! And I taught her how to run my automobile and we licked a boy named Micky Kelly all t'ell and—"

"Ronald!" his mother interrupted, with musical disdain. "Fighting! Oh, Ronald, my precious!" She turned to Carlotta. "Little girl, who are you?"

"I'm Carlotta Benedetti and my father's Giuseppe, only everybody calls him Joe." She wasn't afraid. "He's the garbageman," she added.

"The garbageman!"

"Sure he's the garbageman," said Carlotta with arrogance. "He collects from all you folks. And say, Mrs. Bruce—"

"Child! Not another word! Ronald—come with me!"

But Carlotta's Latin instinct for compliment had asserted itself.

"My father says you have the swellest garbage in Sundale!" she asserted, and Mrs. Bruce, for once, was shocked into silence.

She seized Ronald by the arm.

"Little girl," she began, to Carlotta, "thank you very much indeed for helping my son. I am sorry that I cannot ask you to stay. Now be a good child and run home, and here's something—"

She extended a shining quarter. Carlotta looked at it. Then suddenly she struck at the hand.

"I don't want your old money!" she said. "You make me sick. You just go t'ell now, will you?"

She saw, through tears, a scandalized Mrs. Bruce dragging a limp Ronald away. At the top of the porch stairs Ronald almost managed to twist away. He grinned.

"S'long, Carlotta!" he shouted defiantly. Then he disappeared. She burst into howls of rage and shame.

Carlotta departed, sniffing. Some time later she discovered that one of her hands was clutching a quarter—her quarter—returned to her by the maid. She had another impulse to throw it away. Then she hesitated. After all, it was something. It meant, in those inexpensive days, two sodas and candy besides. Her sobs began to diminish.

Imagine that you are looking at an "art title"—one of those things with Easter lilies twined about hour glasses, and a clock face with genuine movable hands. Yes, that's the idea. Thirteen years, as the films would say, have rolled their weary months away. It is 1923.

The scene, too, is changed—from Sundale to an apartment on West End Avenue. An expensive apartment, too, in a house that seems able to afford innumerable attendants dressed like Jugo-Slavian major-generals. How did Carlotta get here? For she is here.

The answer is a bad bill for garden produce, contracted while Joe was sick. It was after Joe had risen to the little grocery store down by the station. Luigi, the eldest boy, went up one day to collect the Hopkinson account—and Mr.

Hopkinson paid him with stock in the Hopkinson Incinerator. And now, of course—the Hopkinson Incinerator, "Fresh as a Rose"—well, Mr. Hopkinson spends his winters in Florida, the Benedettis of Sundale have become the Benedicts of New York, and the only sorrow in Carlotta's life is that the imported cook will not allow her *gnocchi* at every meal. But Carlotta has luxuriated in the change in the family fortunes. Her name is now Charlotte, and she has developed a stare, an accent and a taste for the most expensively simple clothes.

At the moment she is engaged in cautiously unpeeling from her face a green, adhesive mask of complexion clay. The maid should be doing it, doubtless, but the maid is out. Every now and then Anna rebels against her new environment, usually on Sunday, brusquely dismisses the servants for a while, and cooks a gigantic dinner, reeking of Parmesan cheese and garlic, to her own intense satisfaction. It is Sunday afternoon now, and Anna is perfectly happy.

The doorbell rings and "Darn!" says Carlotta, dabbing under one eye. It rings again.

"Go see what that make, Charlotta!" calls Anna from the kitchen.

"Oh darn!" wails Carlotta softly, but after a frantic interval of rubbing she goes.

Her appearance, as she opens the door, she herself would describe as "simply loathsome." It is not; in fact, she is very pretty with her olive skin and her soft hair, successfully grown in again now.

"What is it, please?"—as she opens the door. Then, seeing a tall, unknown young man with a suitcase: "I think you must have mistaken the floor. This is Mr. Benedict's apartment."

"Right," says the tall young man, with a grin. "Mr. Joseph Benedict. Is he here? I have a package for him."

"Mr. Benedict will not return for some hours," says Carlotta formally. "I am Miss Benedict. I will sign."

"Oh, it isn't the kind you sign for!"—and the tall young man's grin grows wider. "If you'll let me come in for a moment. Thanks. Right here."

He opens the suitcase while Carlotta looks on nervously. He extracts three bulky packages that gurgle internally as he sets them on a table.

"Books," he explains sardonically. "Gems of Scotch and Italian literature. C.O.D."

"Oh yes," says the sophisticated Carlotta. "Just a moment, please."

She goes to the telephone.

"John ninety-nine thousand . . . Mr. Joseph Benedict, please, Miss Charlotte Benedict speaking . . . 'Papa'—she does not say *papa*—this is Charlotte . . . Yes . . . A—gentleman has called with some books for you C.O.D." She puts her hand over the receiver.

"How much?" she queries. The young man mentions a price—ineffable wealth to the old Carlotta. But she is not surprised. "Yes. I'll pay for them, then? Very well . . . Oh, papa—the darlingest pair of earrings. At Tiffany's. Oh, you're sweet!" She hangs up the receiver.

"If you'll just wait a moment—"

"Delighted. Though, if I may comment—prudent of you to phone, of course—but quite unnecessary. We rather pride ourselves on our high-class trade."

"I beg your pardon?" remarks Carlotta icily, sweeping away.

She returns with the money.

"Thank you." He turns to go.

But Carlotta has been observing him rather closely. Having been a flapper in flapper time, she is now at the other extreme. A litter of Serious Books on economics, on social reform, on womanhood—books stressing the Power of Woman as a Good Influence—lie about her room.

"I thought they were all big fat men who never shaved," she remarks, regarding the stranger with wide, interested eyes.

The young man winces. "Oh no! You ought to see the Chief." He chuckles. "He's fat enough, but his clothes come over from England. He's putting Mr. Benedict up for the Roque Club just now."

"Oh! Really? How fascinating!"—with sarcasm.

"We-el," says the young man, "have to throw some sort of a front, you know. The profession's settling down—getting quite aristocratic in spots. Has to. The best people don't care about dealing with utter bounders—even in bootlegging. So, Oh, I can assure you—three-fourths of our staff are college men."

"College men! Phi Beta Kappa, too, I suppose?"

He nods apologetically. "Guilty as charged. Oh well, if you *will* be so high-hatty!" He displays a key.

Carlotta is speechless for a moment. Then "Oh yes, they do have them—in pawnshops," she murmurs freeingly.

He sighs. "They do—the robbers! I only got mine out when I started in business—"

"But do you mean—"

"Why not, my inquisitive damsel? Look at me."

"Well—"

"Well, that's why I'm useful. Harvard. The war. The family goes broke. *Voilà*. No, I'm not supporting a crippled mother and six sisters. But I couldn't support an Airedale selling bonds or doing the other things bright lads with private incomes take a flutter at. I've tried it. Not for little Ronnie." His shoulders droop.

Now Carlotta is genuinely touched. Here is a real opportunity for individual social research—a chance to Save a Fellow Creature from His Worst Self.

"But—must you be a bootlegger?" she says, rather inanely. "Just think—when you—when you're brainy and everything."

"I've thought. Being broke facilitates cogitation. Yes, I must. And, believe me, being a good bootlegger takes more brains than you think. Well, I must be going—two more trips to make."

But she halts him imperiously.

"I wish you could tell me—why—sometime," she breathes. She has seen people "breathe" in the movies. All the fervor of a Young Woman with a Noble Purpose is in her eyes.

"Delighted," he says, unenthusiastically. "When? I can hardly call in the usual way, of course."

"Perhaps we could meet—some day. I could put on old clothes—if you'd let me come to your dive—your headquarters. I mean—and then—I wouldn't be afraid! If I could show you the vileness of it all—convince you—"

"You have been attending the theater very recently," says the young man sadly. "Headquarters—such as it is—is the Roque Club. Suppose we say the grill at the Incandescent, for luncheon. Tuesday? At one?"

"The Hotel Incandescent?" Carlotta says, dumfounded.

"Check. Oh, you needn't be alarmed! The head waiter knows me. In fact, I supply him. I'll phone and see if he'll give us *crêpes Suzette*. It's a date? Good. And by the way—in case I should be delayed—the table will be in the name of Bruce—Mr. Ronald Bruce. And I'm sure that you will convince me—of anything—through luncheon at least."

He departs. Carlotta, left to herself, reverts to childishness. "Oh gee! Mr. Ronald Bruce!" she sighs in a terrified whisper. "Oh, holy gee!"

"But Ronald, you don't remember Micky Kelly. You can't!"

"Micky Kelly! Should say I do! But do you remember—"

"Yes, and the way that—"

"Yes, and then we—oh listen, Charlotte—Carlotta—"

There was a good deal of that sort of thing in the months that followed the luncheon in the Incandescent Grill. In fact, there were all the time-hallowed incidents of secret courtship there have been since the day Mr. Montague, Junior, noticed that the Capulet girl could dance, and before. There were quarrels and reconciliations. But, finally, there was a *matinée*—and it rained—and he was taking her home in a taxi. And:

"Isn't it wonderful!" said Carlotta. "Oh Ronnie—Ronnie!"

"Carlotta—darling Carlotta!"

"Say, what's 'at number, brother?" said the chauffeur after a lengthy pause.

"It doesn't matter. Go drive around the Park for a while—a long while—I'll tell you when to stop. . . Carlotta, you're going to marry me!"

"Well, now that you ask me—"

A lengthy pause.

"Say, I been around the Park once now. Maybe you'd like to take a run out Westchester way," suggested the driver coquettishly later. "Some of 'em do."

"Yes—anywhere—go ahead! Only keep on moving!"

"Oh Ronnie, no! We can't. I must go back. I'm late for dinner now."

"Say, I know a Justice of the Peace in Jersey that'll marry anybody!" suggested the driver.

"Keep moving," said Ronald inexorably. "And cut the chatter."

"Ronnie, when'll we tell them?"

"Tell them?" said Ronnie brightly.

"Tell them—why, angel, we'll—tell them right away—right away—oh, my Lord!" he groaned.

"Now Ronnie—"

"But Carlotta—"

"Well, of course, if you don't want to marry me—"

"Darling!"

"Well. And you're going to get out of that nasty bootlegging right away—"

"Yes, but—"

"Well, I'm twenty-one, and I've still got those bonds that papa—"

"But Carlotta, dear, I can't live on your money—"

"Well, you have some. You told me yesterday how you'd saved—"

At last they decided what people generally decide, not to do anything right away.

A certain Mr. Richardson of the Roque Club shook his head as he parted from his favorite bootlegger that evening. "Better get this stuff analyzed," he thought cheerlessly, "if it's what that young man has been sampling. He certainly looked doped."

The following week the lovers plucked up courage enough to meet in Carlotta's apartment occasionally. So, some weeks from the date of the historic taxi ride, it was not surprising that Carlotta's father, returning unexpectedly from downtown with a nasty feeling of approaching grip in his bones, should have discovered his only daughter in the living room having coffee with a perfectly strange young man who was sitting on the arm of her chair.

"Carlotta!" he thundered. "What are you doing, Carlotta?"

The couple jumped apart. But Carlotta was game. "We're engaged," she said firmly. "Father, this is my fiancé, Mr. Ronald Bruce. Ronnie—"

But Mr. Benedict had already recognized Ronnie. "Engaged!" he said, breathing heavily. "*Sposi*—huh? Carlotta, you go to your room!"

"I won't," said Carlotta. "Not unless you promise to be nice to him. Oh papa, we meant to tell you but—"

"You go to your room!" said Mr. Benedict. "I know this young man—I



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know him ver' well. He is a bootlegger. Engaged! I give this young man two seconds to get out of my door!"

"I was a bootlegger," murmured Ronald softly. "But I'm not any more. I'm a life insurance salesman. Let me give you my card, Mr. Benedict, and by the way, in case you should not happen to be insured, we—"

Mr. Benedict struck the card to the floor. "You get out!" he panted. "You—you—"

"Ronnie, stay here!" said Carlotta, and Ronnie stayed. Mr. Benedict flung out his arms. "If he goes, I go with him," said Carlotta firmly. "You see, we're engaged."

Mr. Benedict paid no attention.

"Thirty years ago I come here from Italy!" he groaned. "And I start my little business—and Anna and me we work, we work all time. And then we get rich and now I am rich man. And I think—my children they will not work so hard—they will have education—they make themselves as good as any other children, here, in America. And now—my daughter—and a bootlegger!"

He burst into tears. Anna, arriving, aroused by the noise, beheld him. A rapid colloquy informed her of the facts.

"You are a de-vill!" she said, pointing at Ronnie, then burst into tears as well.

Ronnie, perspiring, welcomed as a miracle the click of a key in the door.

The door swung open, admitting Louis—née Luigi—and a prosperous looking older man.

Louis took in the situation. "Say, what's all this—grand opera?" he said.

Tumult arose. He quelled it. "Just a minute. How do, Mr. Bruce, glad to see you. Mother, stop! I'd like to present my friend Mr. Winterbottom—we're going into partnership—I told you, Ed, you'll have to take us as you find us—the family seems rather disturbed at present."

"Oh, that's all right," said Mr. Winterbottom generously, shaking hands. "Family man myself."

"Mr. Winterbottom," said Anna, sniffing, "we—"

"Oh, let's all sit down," said Louis impatiently. "No use in standing around like this. Yes, mother, I'll fix up everything just as soon as I get what it's all about. Nobody's died, you know."

"She is dead to me!" said Anna. "Oh, my little daughter!"

Louis paid no attention. "There now—everybody sit down! Right. Try that chair, Ed. Cigarette? Oh yes, the little drink." He pressed a bell.

"Drink!" said Mr. Benedict, with loathing. A maid appeared.

"Will you mix six Bronxes, Mary, and bring them in right away? Oh yes, you will, mother—cheer you up. Now then—" He turned to Carlotta. "As I get it, you and Mr. Bruce are engaged."

Four voices asserted at once that she was, she wasn't, she never would be, she would be married that very evening.

"Oh, don't all talk at once!" said Louis impatiently. "Father, don't bounce up and down so—you'll wear out the sofa. Leave this to me. You're engaged, Carlotta? Sure?"

"Completely, thank you, Louis."

"How about you, Bruce?"

"I love Miss Benedict and will do anything in my power to make her happy."

"Good! I believe you. And this just

happened recently and you meant to tell but just hadn't gotten around to it? And father just found out?" A bilingual clamor assured him that such was the case.

"Very well. Oh, here are the cocktails! Mud in your eye, Ed!"

"How!" said Mr. Winterbottom laconically.

The others, one by one, drained and set down their glasses.

"Good stuff, Bruce," said Louis kindly. Ronald shivered. "Oh, good product's a good product—no matter what it is. Well, let's get on. As father seems rather excited right now, I'll take it upon myself to ask you about your prospects and so on. Of course, you understand—"

"I understand," said Ronald, with a weak smile. "I resigned two weeks ago. Last week I started selling insurance. Of course, I haven't done very much so far, but—"

"Oh, that's all right! That clears up things. I may have a proposition to make you later that may interest you—he's one of the people I talked to you about, Ed. I don't have to ask you about your family and so forth—I know all about them. You come of very high-class people, Bruce."

"Thank you," said Ronald. "Genteel, but busted."

"Yes. As I say, high-class. Your father originated the Bruce Baby Blanket—They Make Your Kiddie Comfy. A very clever man."

"Except that he sold Mexican Petroleum short," said Ronald wryly.

"And your mother was a social leader."

"Before the Blanket Trust squeezed father," Ronald admitted.

"Exactly. Well, that is very satisfactory. Now, Bruce, the only practical difficulty that occurs to me—"

"Good heavens, he talks exactly as if he were a sales expert and we were a product," thought Ronald dazedly.

"Is this. What is going to be your family's attitude in regard to the match?"

"Well—" Ronald considered. "Well, Benedict—or should I say brother Louis? If you'll answer for—um—your side, I'll answer for mine. We never were too Social Register—if that's what you mean."

"All right. Then everything's fixed. I congratulate you, Bruce. You've got a fine girl. Come here, Carlotta." He kissed her. "We'll give you a first-class wedding. Just let Louis fix it."

"Not while I live—to a bootlegger!" said Mr. Benedict, but his protest was faint.

Anna, suddenly reversing her attitude with Tuscan abruptness, flung her arms about Ronald's neck. "If my Louis says it's so—it's so," she said, weeping. "I give you my child, Mr. Bruce—be good to her—eh!" She dissolved.

Mr. Benedict came over and put his hand on her shoulder.

"Come, Anna, you let me shake hands with him," he said defeatedly.

"And now," said Louis cheerily, "just a little business. The little proposition I was going to make to you, Bruce."

"Ed here—Mr. Winterbottom—and myself are going into partnership. The Winterdict Photofilm Corporation—the first practical plan for putting moving pictures into every home. You see—we have exclusive rights on a new motion picture film—made of wood fiber—non-inflammable, practically indestructible—

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Ronald gaped, speechless.

"Two hundred a month to start—and commissions. We'll figure on the commissions," said Louis hastily. "All the opportunity there is for the right man."

"Well, of course, I'd be most delighted to try—" began Ronald modestly.

Louis seized him by the hand. "Good. It's a go, then. And of course if you happen to have any money lying idle—we propose to issue stock—"

"I think I could put up a little," said Ronald dizzily.

"Fine. Now just one more point. You'd better get married soon—we believe in married men—it's an incentive. Can't give you more than a week off for it, but—"

"I'm dreaming!" said Ronald firmly. He reached for Carlotta—and was appalled to see her on the verge of tears.

"Oh, Ronnie, I can't!" she wailed.

"I've been thinking it over and I can't! Your family—Louis said they were so high-class—and you're descended from Robert Bruce and everything—and I'd only be a handicap—"

Ronald heaved a vast sigh of relief. He took both her hands.

"All bunk," he said, "or most of it. Synthetic, darling, that's all."

"Syn—synthetic?"

"Synthetic, like the rest of my Scotch—or what used to be my Scotch. Oh, mother's genuine enough—her ancestors did come over steerage on the Mayflower, I believe. As if that mattered! The second one in America—well, mother will stick to it that he was a country gentleman—as a matter of fact he kept a perfectly respectable little tavern outside of Boston. The Indian Warrior—the neighbors called him Ambling Asaph Pole. Of course it changed into Poole by the time it got to mother."

"As for father—"

He laughed.

"Did you ever meet one of these genealogical birds who make a specialty of hooking you up with kings and princes? The one we had mapped out a wonderful line for father—right back to Robert Bruce. Oh, it pleased mother immensely! Me too, till I found out about some of his other clients. He had a man named Isaacstein—one of the war babies—descended from old St. Louis—not the town, the man! It's wonderful what you can do with a little ingenuity!"

"Oh!" said Carlotta happily. Her eyes were still a little dubious, but she couldn't help herself now.

They embraced.

The maid, appearing from nowhere, began to collect the cocktail glasses.

"Oh Mary!" said the magnificent Louis commandingly. "Six more Bronxes!"

This is really a very immoral story.

The Mysterious Woman

(Continued from page 64)

on her pad, but she didn't look particularly fond of it; and a few minutes later when she regained her desk in the outer office, she stared out of the window for a while.

"You'd think—at his age——" she uncertainly began.

Behind her, then, arose the invisible figure of Old Gooseberry—he who had compiled the table of girls' chances—he of the horns and the hoof—and bending over, he whispered to Jill one of those wise sayings which nearly all modern girls know so well. "The older they are, the harder they fall," he told her.

"But—married——" she continued.

You could almost imagine Old Gooseberry taking a pinch of snuff and smilingly dusting a few odd grains from the frill of his shirt. "Didn't you ever hear of divorce, my dear?" said he.

On her way home that evening, Jill tried to think of something else, but she wasn't very successful. For one thing, her way took her along the Post Road with its almost continual procession of cars. There were open cars, closed cars, fast, slow, rich and shady, but each—save a few—held a traveling lady.

A limousine swept by, and it seemed to Jill that the woman in the rear seat looked at her from underneath the eyebrows of superiority. "Pooh!" thought Miss Angela Wilson. "You needn't swell up! I could ride in one, too—if I wanted."

Old Gooseberry the Invisible bobbed up. "You could do it now—yes," said he, "but how about next year? How about the year after next?" And down he bobbed again, taking his snuff box out.

It is hard for any man to judge a girl. "Makes you sick," thought Jill, "the way some folks have money, and some have none."

Which is a very ancient malady indeed.

Speaking of riches, Flubby's wallet arose to her mind. "Longview seven hundred," she could hear him saying. "I shall be there till eleven."

"Oh, shut up!" she peevishly told herself. "What does he think I am?"

Old Gooseberry came up like a jack-in-the-box. "A mighty nice girl, or he wouldn't want to go out with you."

"Huh!" said Jill. "Like fun!"

In spite of this she presently found herself thinking of Flubby and his disappearing wife, as thousands of girls have thought of such things before.

For the last two years Mrs. Terriss had lived in Paris. Mr. Terriss had leased the house on the Post Road and had taken a suite at the Longview Arms. More than once Jill had taken late arriving letters there and had left them with the clerk at the desk, getting a hasty view of the Peacock Room where the cuckoos would presently be dancing with the chickens—the cuckoos in Tuxedos and the chickens with very little feathers on. Yes . . . he might get a divorce some day . . .

Jill's next remark was peculiar.

"Rotten!" she said.

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would probably have thought that she was quiet. And yet among the boarders there was a young man sitting opposite to her; and another, not so young, by her side. The young man, however, only spoke three times, the first two times saying "I'll say so," and the third time, "I'll tell the world." He was really a nice young fellow, but Jill had been hearing those two wise cracks of his for months.

The man who was not so young had nice eyes and a nice voice, his only drawback being that he was engaged to a girl on Washington Avenue. She was a bossy little thing with a pug nose and broomstick ankles.

"Some girls don't know how lucky they are," thought Jill.

Which is most surprisingly true.

She didn't eat much dinner, and as soon as she could she went to her room. Her windows opened on the street, and for a time she sat looking out at the trees and slowly rocking herself into one of those mournful states which Old Gooseberry probably had in mind when he compiled his table of chances.

She hadn't been at the window long when the young fellow who told the world went out, his hat on one side, his trousers creased, his shoes like polished mahogany. "Off to see a girl somewhere," thought Jill with a touch of mournfulness.

The next to go was the nice man, bound for Washington Avenue. "Every night lately," thought Jill. "He won't be here much longer."

The next to appear were her mother and Mr. Dodge, the insurance man—evidently bound for the movies together.

"Good night!" thought Jill; and drawing down the shades more vigorously than was necessary, she lighted the lamp.

To tell the truth, it wasn't a bad room. But when you've said and done, it was only a room, about twelve feet by fifteen, and that night it seemed to Jill more like a prison than a home.

"All the things that are happening in the world," she told herself with a gesture that had something tragic about it, "and I have to stick here alone—night after night!"

And there at last was the secret of her distemper. It wasn't that she was crazy for a man. Few girls are, and those few are better described in the medical journals. What Jill had suddenly discovered that she wanted was adventure, a part to play on the stage of life, beautiful scenes, autumn leaves and sunsets, moons rising over rippling waters, a spotlight now and then perhaps, stirring incident leading to breathless climax—in short, all the thrills of life and pleasures of existence. But for a girl to enter this promised land she needs a Moses; and now that Wib had failed her, you see, there was only one Moses on the horizon, and that was Old Flubby.

It is hard for any man to judge a girl. "Silly old fool!" she told herself in a voice that had something husky about it.

She read for a while, sitting beneath a picture of her brother; and if you had been there, you would have been quick to see the resemblance between them—the Gainsborough look, imagination's span between their eyes. "Oh, bother!" she muttered at last, throwing the book on the table. "Guess I'll knit instead."

From a drawer she drew a half finished

sweater and very soberly she settled down to work—click-click-click—and only she could have told you the thoughts which were knitted in with the yarn.

Somewhere downstairs a clock struck.

"Nine," she told herself.

Up bobbed Old Gooseberry.

"Till eleven," he whispered. "Telephone, Longview seven hundred."

Two fat tears rolled down Jill's cheeks; and oh, but wasn't she mad when she had had her cry out!

It's hard for any man to judge a girl.

"You make me sick," she told herself.

After that she whistled, and after that she said: "I know what I'll do. I'll write a nice long letter to Wib."

It was half past nine when she had finished her letter, and when she read it over she decided that it sounded sad. So she tore it up. Wib hadn't been getting along any too well at his new job in the city, and sad letters from home were among the last things that he needed.

"He never ought to have gone there in the first place," she told herself. "I'll bet Mr. Terriss could find him a good job right here in Longview—if he wanted—and then, even if Wib did get married, I'd have some place to go nights—"

At half past ten her mother and Mr. Dodge came home. The house gradually grew quiet.

"What a life!" thought Jill.

With a sudden air of defiance she went to her closet and took out her best dress—an evening frock which she had only worn once. There were slippers to go with it, and on the next hanger a cape.

"They'll soon be out of style, too," she told herself.

For the next few minutes it was nip and tuck—Old Gooseberry bobbing up and down as though he were on a seesaw, and finally bringing up the masked and hooded figure of Jill's future to frighten her. "See this mysterious woman?" he said. "If I were to take the mask off, do you think it would be anything pretty? It would not! You'd see yourself an old maid crippled up with neuritis, who's never been anywhere or seen anything—or had anything happen to her—"

But in the end it was the vision of Old Flubby which decided the issue—fat and puffy, and always with a background of European wife. "I hate him!" Jill suddenly exclaimed to herself, and almost snatching off her clothes, she knelt down for a moment and then popped into bed.

For a long time she lay there, pretending that she was going to sleep, but knowing right well that she wasn't.

It is hard for any man to judge a girl.

"Tick-tick-tick-tick," said the clock.

An item which she had once read in a newspaper arose in her memory.

"It is estimated that in the United States alone an average of three million people attend the theaters every night."

"They're just about coming out now," she told herself, "and here am I—in bed!"

She sat up then, imploring, almost incoherent in the darkness. "Oh, if something would only happen to me—the same as it does to other girls!"

As though in answer, a step creaked on the stairs and a moment later a knock sounded on Jill's door.

"Who's there?" she called.

There was breathlessness in the answer, but there was a note of fear as well.

"It's me—Wib. Quick. Let me in!"

The moment Wib entered the room, Jill knew she wasn't going to hear good news. "What is it?" she asked, suddenly grown breathless too.

At first, for all his hurry, he hardly knew how to begin.

"What is it, Wib?" she asked. "Have you—hurt somebody?"

"No," he said, and then with one of his dramatic gestures, "not yet. But if I can't get out of the hole I'm in, I shall hurt myself before morning. And nobody's going to stop me, either!"

"Wib!" she pleaded—this girl who, a minute before, had almost been praying for something to happen. "What is it?"

It didn't take long to tell.

He had been working in New York for Ginsberg—"Ginsberg, He'll Trust You"—Ginsberg, who tempted the young to marry on the attractive terms of two dollars a week and up. Wib was an instalment collector, and taking his employer's motto too literally, he was two hundred dollars short in his cash.

"They were all doing it," he continued. "What did Ginsberg care? Every one of us is under bond. It was a poor auditing system that did it—always gave you a chance to be a week behind. But all at once the insurance company woke up and late this afternoon two of the boys in Harlem—well, they didn't go home for supper—that's all. And tomorrow morning the insurance auditors are coming up to our place and—for Heaven's sake, Jill, have you got two hundred dollars that you can lay your hands on quick?"

Jill was about to shake her head when again Flubby's wallet arose to her memory.

Perhaps Wib noticed her hesitation.

"Listen," he eagerly continued. "I don't want you to think I'm crooked. Good and crooked, I mean. This money I'm short, I lent it to Edith's brother, and he swore by all that's holy that he'd pay it back within two days. Of course that doesn't do me any good—"

Jill hardly heard him.

Yes . . . Mr. Terriss would let her have the money. She glanced at the clock. It was nearly eleven. Two hundred dollars—he'd never miss it—but—and oh, it was a big, big *but!*—what would he want in exchange for it?

"You can see for yourself what it means," arose Wib's voice again. "If I go to jail for a thing like this, I'm through. Absolutely down and out. But if I can pull through somehow—"

It was then that the inspiration came to her. Her closet door was ajar, and the light of the room shone through the opening on her cape. The cape itself might not have suggested it, but hanging on the hook above was a scarf which matched the yellow sweater that she was knitting.

"The Woman in the Yellow Mask," she thought, a thrill running over her. "And—as soon as I could save it up, of course I'd mail it back to him—and—sign it 'Conscience.'"

Almost in another flash she saw how the thing might be done. Old Flubby would leave the golf club probably soon after eleven, and after driving his car to the hotel garage he would walk over to the Longview Arms—two quiet, deserted blocks where anything might happen.

"And if I lost my nerve, I could ask him



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for it. Or—if anything went wrong—I could say that I was joking, and wanted to find out if he really meant what he said at the office this morning. I could even say I had a bet with somebody."

In all this fog at least one thing was clear. Wib mustn't go to jail. "Here," she said, suddenly breaking into action. "You run upstairs and talk to Mom for a while. I won't be long."

"What are you going to do?"

"I'm going to dress," she told him.

But as soon as Wib was gone she went first to her bottom bureau drawer—that drawer in which nearly every girl keeps her secrets and souvenirs—and after a few moments' rummaging her hand closed around a revolver which had been her father's. It was rusty with age, but when Jill turned it up to take a hurried glance down the barrel, it might have been the eye of Fate that stared back at her: calm—and commanding—and cold.

At a quarter past eleven Jill hurried past the Longview Arms, a mysterious figure herself in her long cape and drooping tam-o'-shanter. After a moment's hesitation she took her stand in the doorway of the Longview Harness Company nearby, pretending to look at a steamer trunk in the window, her heart going "pitter-patter, pitter-patter."

"I'll never be able to do it," she despairingly told herself.

Indeed her first impulse was to get back home as fast as she could, but the memory of Wib waiting there soon stopped that.

"I used to have nerve enough once," she thought. "I wonder if I've lost it." To which she quickly, almost proudly replied "I have not!"—and a few seconds later inconsequentially added, "Besides, I can always ask him for it—if I want to."

Then her heart skipped a beat, for in the next block she caught sight of a familiar figure strolling toward the hotel. "He's coming!" she breathed.

After all, it was simple enough, and long ago Jill had learned to steel herself for a crucial moment.

"It'll only take a minute," she thought, "and then——"

All this time her victim had steadily been drawing nearer, and at the word "then" Jill slipped her scarf up around her face and stepped out from the doorway. Simultaneously the most astonished man in Longview that night suddenly found his progress stopped by an old-fashioned revolver.

"Throw up your hands!" said Jill in her deepest voice.

"Crummy!" muttered the other.

He started to raise his hands, but half-way up, with a movement like lightning, he had knocked the weapon out of Jill's grasp and had both her wrists in a grip like a bear trap. For one thing, though, he had caught her off her balance, for from the moment that he had spoken she had known that it wasn't Old Flubby at all, but that it was one of those bulky, hard looking citizens with walrus mustaches, purple-faced and efficient, who are generally associated with the ancient and honorable profession of plain-clothes men.

"Well!" said Old Walrus, breathing hard with satisfaction. "See what I've got!"

Jill tried to wrench herself away, but in the end she could only stand there

panting, a poor little rabbit in the coils of a wise old serpent.

"It'll be in the papers tomorrow——" she half sobbed, and thinking that she perceived at last the mask removed from her Mysterious Woman, she saw herself in a crowded court-room, with everybody staring at her—and then in a narrow prison cell. Whereupon for the second time she tried to wrench herself free, and was still at it when a dark looking touring car stopped at the sidewalk near them with a dark looking man in the front seat.

"What you got, Joe?" asked the driver.

"Something pretty," said Joe. "Tried to hold me up. Me! Ain't that rich?" Continuing to hold Jill's wrists without apparent effort, he evidently spoke of something else. "What did they tell you at the garage?" he asked.

"Loose bearing."

"Thought so."

He stood for a moment in ostentatious reflection, evidently the leader of the two.

"Open the rear door," he said at last.

"I guess we're good for a few miles yet."

"The police station now," thought Jill with a dreadful sensation in her stomach, and although she tried once more to wrench herself free, it wasn't long before she found herself on the back seat of the touring car by the side of Old Walrus.

"Might as well tie her scarf around her mouth," he said to the driver. "No use waking the babies when we get to the Post Road."

"A lot of good it would do me to scream," thought Jill as the car moved on, "or I'd have screamed, all right."

Joe leaned forward and began to talk, almost under his breath, to the man in the front seat. Once she caught the words "North Adams the first morning, and Montreal the second." Then the driver whispered, "We'll need a good car to do it." "That's all right," said Joe, "we'll get a good car. I got an idea. Keep on straight for another mile and then turn to the left. I'll show you."

At this Jill gasped a little.

"Why, that'll bring us out on the other side of Longview!" she thought. "That's nowhere near the police station." It struck her then for the first time with full force that it wasn't exactly official conduct to muffle her so that she couldn't cry out. "No, sir! I don't believe they're policemen at all. They just happened to catch me—and now they're taking me—now they're taking me—where?"

It required all of Joe's strength to hold her then, and by the time that Jill had caught her breath they were on a lonely road that led to the Sound. They pulled over to one side and stopped.

"Now look here, sis," said Joe, a deadly purpose all at once appearing in his voice. "You might as well have cut out all that funny business. Gets you nowhere; see? Lucky for you that we happened to be a couple of wise ones ourselves. But right now we're in trouble—see?—and you've gotta help us out."

He turned to his friend.

"Get the tire wrench out," he said, "and throw it near the front wheel. That's right. Now beat it back to the curve that we just swung around and give a whistle if you see anything coming this way."

Dimly, vaguely, Jill began to wonder what was expected of her, but it didn't take long for Joe to supply the details.

"You got a puncture, see?" he continued, "and you're all alone, and you don't know much about it. Pretty skirt like you—every car that comes along will stop and help you. But it ain't a little machine we want. It's a big one; see? I'll be hiding here in the back seat and I'll let you know the car we want. Any others that stop, I'll show myself; but when the right one comes along, you're going to see something pretty. Come here."

He walked her to one of the front wheels. "You're to be fiddling with this tire; see?" said he. "And now let me tell you something. If you try one more trick on me—just one—you'll never try another. You get me straight on that?"

"Yes," said Jill, her voice so low that it was hardly audible.

"All right; we'll see." Far up the road a slight haze became visible. "Car coming. Grab that wrench! That's right! Get busy now!"

He disappeared and a moment later Jill heard the car creak as he climbed into the rear seat. Her first impulse was to run for it, but with woods on one side and marsh land on the other, the outlook wasn't encouraging.

"All the same, I ought to warn them," she breathlessly told herself as the other car drew rapidly nearer. "But what can I do without him seeing me back here? There must be some way—"

Fortunately no warning was necessary. The other machine proved to be a lightweight runabout, and as it slowed down to a stop Joe raised himself from the tonneau and strode over to Jill's side.

"Want any help?" a voice called out.

"Nope," said Joe shortly.

"Thought the lady was alone."

"Nope; she's all right."

The other machine moved on, and Joe returned to his hiding place, for all the world like a big black spider who had just come out of his nest on a false alarm. The next car and the next both stopped and offered to help, but each time at the last minute Joe showed himself.

"You'd think that all the flivvers on earth were out for a ride tonight," he grumbled after the third one had passed; but suddenly turning and listening to a deeper hum that was approaching them from the Sound, he more hopefully added, "Here comes something that sounds better," and hurried back to his lair.

Yes . . . Something better was undoubtedly drawing nearer, its lamps fixed upon them like a pair of inquisitive spotlights, its engine purring to itself as though on a low, thoughtful note of interrogation. As it drew nearer it came more and more slowly, till only about a dozen yards separated the two machines.

"It's stopping!" thought Jill, her heart not far from her mouth.

The headlights of the approaching car suddenly ceased to shine upon her, boring their tunnel of light up the dark road instead. Relieved of the glare, Jill hurriedly turned to see what was coming.

It was a large car—one of those fancy affairs which might have reminded you of a very speedy old lady, perfumed, bejeweled and upholstered to the nines. There were two men in it, and just for a moment the lights of Jill's machine shone upon them. The first, in the driver's seat, was Bob Terriss of blessed memory; and the second, red-faced, beaming,

fascinating, already leaning over the door to shout his offer of help, was Flubby—Old Flubby—himself . . .

While the other cars had been stopping and starting, Jill had decided upon her plan of campaign; and when Flubby's car had nearly come to a standstill, she jumped on its running board, a breathless figure of mingled excitement and warning.

"Don't stop!" she exclaimed. "There's a man here waiting to steal your car! Drive on quick! He's coming! Quick!"

Almost before she had finished, Joe was on the running board in front of her, a dark blue piece of hardware pointed at Bob Terriss.

"Put that brake on again!" he commanded, but that was as far as he got. Without knowing it, Jill had retained possession of the tire wrench, and now with a fine overhand swing she brought it down on the other's head . . . Tough old leather, it must have bent though it didn't break, and instinctively Joe turned to protect himself against another crack.

But the running board of a slowly moving car provides precarious footing at the best of times, and as he grappled blindly at Jill, both went down on the road together. Fortunately, as she thought at the time, Jill fell free, but as she regained her feet a spurt of flame shot out with a bang from where Joe had fallen—a spurt of flame which seemed to touch her side for a searing moment. There were a few confused seconds in which Bob Terriss appeared to land on Old Walrus with both hands and feet. Then either the stars came down to visit the earth, or the earth rushed up to meet the stars, and Jill quite lost track of current history.

A week later Miss Angela Wilson was sitting up in bed; and you would have looked a long, long time before you'd have found a more interesting looking patient.

There was a boudoir cap, for instance, with pink rosebuds on it that was worth a careful study; and a kimono that might have been designed by a young Japanese artist who was in love for the first time. Then again, she had the best private room in the hospital—everybody said so—and on the mantel shelf and bureau were vases of flowers and baskets of fruit; items which are never without a certain significance. And not only did she have the best room, but all the doctors told her confidentially that she had the best nurse—a heavenly handmaiden who seemed to have clairvoyant powers.

Now one would think that under such circumstances as these Jill would have been one of the happiest of patients. But you ought to have seen her during the first few days. Of course she knew that she had had a very close call; but she also knew that she had failed to get Wib his two hundred dollars.

"They're keeping it from me because I'm sick," she told herself, "but he's probably in jail by now . . . And what Bob Terriss must be thinking of me—for being in the company of that dirty old thief! A nice family we are! Oh, a nice, nice family!"

Whereupon she stared at the wall until she could fairly see the hooded figure of the future making mournful gestures at her—that mysterious woman of whom she had once read, "And well it is for most

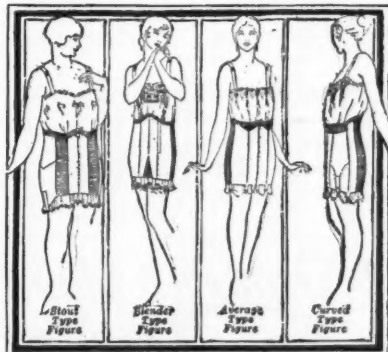


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of us that her face is concealed, for if we could see what is hidden behind that veil, what lonely eyes and sadness of disillusion—we would soon be tempted to ask ourselves 'What's the use?' and cease all further effort."

"I know I'd hate to see what my future looks like," she thought with an ache in her throat. "Dishwasher in a nasty little restaurant, or scrubwoman for poor people, or a gray-haired potato peeler in a work-house: that's what I'd very likely see if my Mysterious Woman raised her veil."

And then one day Wib called—the first time he had seen her since the night she had fared forth to play Dick Turpin.

"Couldn't get off before," he cheerfully told her; "but they said over the phone that you were getting on fine. So I knew there was nothing to worry about."

Nothing to worry about, mind you!

"Wib," she whispered, "what—what happened about the two hundred dollars—that you were short?"

"Oh, that's all right! Edith's brother paid me back the next morning. Taught me a lesson, though."

The heavenly nurse looked in then and made Wib a sign to come away.

"So it was all for nothing," thought Jill bitterly. "All for nothing, and I might just as well have been——"

But was it all for nothing? Does anything ever happen for nothing? Jill's reflections were interrupted by another visitor, Master Robert Terriss, if you please—oh, quite as glorious as on the day when he had kicked Jill in the eye with a football. And not only that, but in his right hand was a tissue cornucopia of flowers, and in his left hand was one of those boxes of candy which have oil paintings on the covers and enough ribbon around them to start an old-fashioned

Maypole. Jill didn't look at these a great deal, though—not at the time; she was too busy looking at Robert; and Robert hadn't been there long when his eyes seemed to become more or less glued on Jill.

And what did they talk about? It would be hard to say, but they hadn't been at it long when Jill perceived that her visitor was under the quaint impression that she had more or less saved his life. She stood it as long as she could, and then she told him how the whole thing had happened. At first, of course, she didn't mean to tell him everything, but only enough to be perfectly honest with him; yet somehow one thing seemed to call for another, and before she knew it she had to go all the way back to a certain member of her family—whose identity she tried to conceal—and his urgent need for funds. Bob listened almost with his mouth open, and when she had finished they looked at each other for a good ten seconds, both breathing rather hard, and then he walked to the window and softly swore to himself.

"And you'd do a thing like that——" he said, returning at last to her side.

A faint flush appeared among the rosebuds, like sunrise in a pergola.

"I'd do anything—for anyone I loved," she simply told him.

Again they looked at each other, and whatever it was that he saw in her eyes, he didn't walk away this time. It was nearly half an hour later before he left, and just before he took his departure Jill glanced over his shoulder. If you had been there, you might have wondered if she was making sure no one was in the doorway. But it was deeper than that. It had occurred to Jill that the masked face of her future had finally uncovered itself for one breathless moment, and that all the time it had had a radiant glow.

*It will be an event in your life when you meet Sally next month
—in Phyllis Duganne's delightful story, "Sally Is Called"*

A Gentleman Comes to Five Fingers

(Continued from page 88)

came to him and took his hand, and in all his life he had never felt such a warm, soft little hand clinging to his.

"My mother is dead, too, Peter," she said. "And so is my father. They were drowned—out there. Pierre Gourdon brought me in from the rock."

It was an uncomfortable moment, and yet something of joy passed into Peter. His fingers tightened about Mona's hand as they both looked off over the cuttings to the wall of forest that shut out Lake Superior from them. They could hear the distant murmuring of the surf.

"I'm glad you've come," she said. "I hope you're going to live here. Are you?"

"Maybe," said Peter.

"You're brave, and I like you. If you were that hateful Aleck Curry——"

"I wouldn't be him," interrupted Peter.

"No, but if you were, and you tried to do what he did, I wouldn't hit you with a stick."

Peter's mind floundered in a futile effort to understand.

"I can lick him tomorrow," he ventured.

With a little laugh she pulled him to the scattered flowers. He helped her pick

them up and put them into one bouquet. His heart beat fast and he was strangely happy. He would surely beg his father to live at Five Fingers.

Then he thought of his message. "I've got something for Simon McQuarrie," he said. "Dad told me to hurry with it."

"And you're hungry."

She took his hand again. There was something maternal about it, something so sweetly glad and friendly that a great wave of comradeship swept through Peter.

Through a glory of warm sunset they crossed the cut-over opens and came soon to the crest of the green slope that looked down on a little paradise hidden away in the heart of a great wilderness, a paradise of green meadows, of water shimmering like silver in the sun, and of the few log homes wherein lived the people whose paths Pierre Gourdon had blazed through the forests many years before.

"That is Five Fingers," said Mona.

And down the slope she led the way with Peter, still holding him by the hand.

He was speechless as they went. Everywhere he looked the earth was gloriously green, and in this green were the scattered

cabins, with little spirals of smoke rising from their chimneys. He could smell this smoke, faintly sweet with the perfume of jack pine pitch and cedar. He saw the big yellow dunes of sawdust about the mill, and in the mill itself, which had only a roof and no sides, the huge steel saw that was silent for the day blazed like a mirror in the sun. The lowing of cattle came up from the green meadows, and he saw horses grazing, and then his heart gave another jump, for between them and the little plain where the settlement lay was a doe and fawn. His fingers tightened suddenly about Mona's hand.

The girl laughed softly.

"That is Minna," she said. "We named her after Geertruda Poulin's last baby. Pierre Gourdon allows no killing for miles and miles around here, and the deer feed out of our hands and eat our hay with the cattle in winter. Only——" Her lovely face clouded, and Peter saw a glow of distress in her eyes. "The men kill porcupines because they eat our chairs and doors and windows. But they bury them for me, over there in my porcupine cemetery, and I plant flowers all around them. I love porcupines."

"So do I," said Peter.

She took his hand again, and they continued down the slope. "Uncle Pierre lets me have three of them for pets," she said. "I have a great many pets, hundreds of them. All the birds and deer and bear and wild things for as far as you can see belong to me, and none of them is afraid of me. Uncle Pierre gave them to me, and no one harms them. No one except Aleck Curry," she added with a quick note of fierceness rising in her voice.

"I'll lick him if he doesn't leave them alone," offered Peter. "I can do it when I'm fed up."

She squeezed his hand. "That's their boat—down there—with the big scow. It comes from Fort William four or five times each spring and summer to take the lumber away. Aleck's father owns it, and I hate him, too. He laughs at Uncle Pierre and wants to bring hunters up."

Peter was silent. A miracle was unfolding itself in his soul and under his eyes. As they came near the first of the cabins he thought again of his father.

"Where does Simon McQuarrie live?"

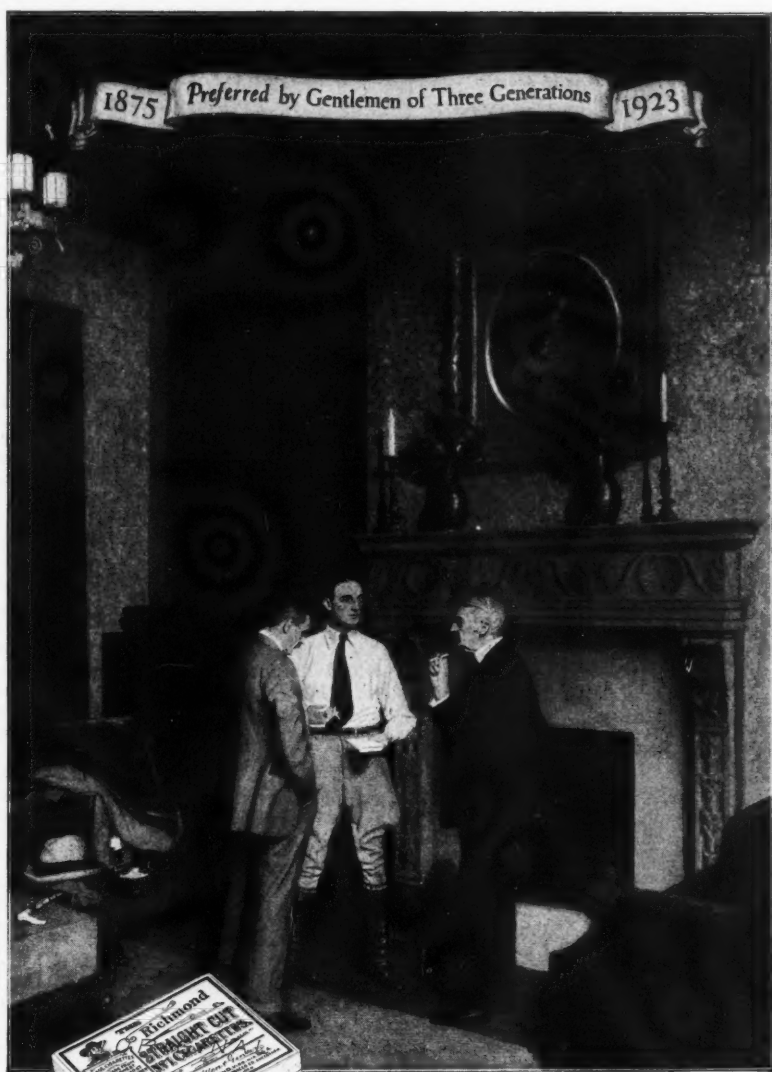
The girl pointed to a little cabin near the mill. "Over there. And that's where I live—in the first of those two big cabins with the rows of white stones around them. Uncle Pierre and Aunt Josette live there, and Marie Antoinette and Joe in the other. Joe is Uncle Pierre's boy, and Marie Antoinette is his wife. You'll love them. Everybody does—except Aleck Curry."

"I smell bacon," suggested Peter.

The girl sniffed. "It—it's from Simon McQuarrie's cabin," she announced, a little disappointed. "Won't you come down to our place? Please!"

"I've got to see Simon," persisted Peter. "My father told me to see him first."

Simon saw them coming. His hard Scotch face softened when he saw Mona, and he scarcely noticed Peter until they were at his open door. Then Mona said, releasing her proprietary hold of the boy's hand: "This is Peter McRae. His father is out in the woods, and he's coming tonight or tomorrow. Peter wants to see you about something, and he's hungry. He just whipped Aleck Curry, and that's



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why his eye is black. Good by, Peter!"

And then a thing happened which would have amazed all the people in Five Fingers could they have seen it, for Simon McQuarrie, with his honest heart and hard face, had never revealed himself a man of emotion. Yet scarcely had Mona gone when he drew Peter in his arms, and his thin gray face shone with a strange light. "Peter—Peter McRae," he said as if speaking to himself. "Helen's boy—and Donald's. It's been a long time since I've seen you, Peter, a long time. And —" He held him off and looked at him in a way that puzzled Peter. "You look like your mother, boy, when she was a little girl. I knew her then."

Peter was fishing in his pocket. "My father sent this to you," he said, giving Simon the bottle.

The Scotchman opened it, and Peter watched his face as he read what was on the paper. He saw the lines about Simon's mouth harden and little wrinkles gather about his eyes. Then he turned, crushing the paper tightly in one hand, and added half a dozen slices of bacon to those already in the pan on the stove. After that he read the paper very deliberately a second time, and burned it. He cut more bread, brought out a pie, and while he added finishing touches to a feast that made Peter's eyes shine, he talked—but not about the paper in the bottle. When supper was ready he ate little himself, but watched the boy. Peter was starved.

When he was done Simon rose and passed a big, lean hand over the boy's fair hair. His heart ached. Yet a duty had been imposed upon him, and he did not draw away from it.

"Tell him now, tonight, as soon as he comes to you," Donald had written. "Before the stars are over me again I want to feel that he knows the truth, and understands, and has forgiven me. It may be I am a coward because I do not tell him myself. But I cannot. I am afraid. I want to think of him always as he has been. I cannot leave him with a heart breaking or his faith dying. God will bless you, Simon. It is for Peter's sake—and Helen's—even more than mine."

They sat down on a bench, facing the last of the sunset, and Simon put his arm about the boy's shoulders. He tried to begin, and something rose in his throat and choked him. He tried again.

"So Mona found you, and you fought Aleck Curry and whipped him?"

"She helped me," confessed Peter. "But I was empty. I can lick him now, when I'm fed up."

Simon's long fingers touched the boy's cheek gently. "You like Mona?"

"Yes, sir."

Simon waited. Then he said:

"Do you want me to tell you a story, Peter—a story about another girl like Mona, who lived a long time ago?"

Peter nodded, wondering if Simon would then tell him something about the bottle.

The story was short, for Simon McQuarrie was a cold and—most people thought—an emotionless man. But his heart was beating painfully as he started it.

"A long time ago there was another girl just like Mona, and just as lovely and sweet, Peter, and there were three boys who grew up near her. But one of these boys was almost a man, much older than the other two, so that when this girl came

to young womanhood he was really almost old enough to be her father. And these three all loved her, every one of them, but one of the three was very much like this Aleck Curry you fought and had a heart in him that didn't know what clean love was. Well, of course, she loved just one of them, Peter, and he was the best and noblest of the three. Her name was Helen."

"My mother's name," said Peter quickly. "Yes, and the odd thing about it is the name of the man she married was Donald, just like your father's. That's why I'm telling you the story, Peter."

Peter was silent.

"The man who was almost old enough to be her father was glad in a way," went on Simon. "No one ever knew just how badly it broke him up, but their happiness in time made him happy, and he was the best friend they ever had. At least, I think he was. But the black-hearted one of the three was different, and one day when Donald and the older man were away he came to her cabin and insulted her, even though she had a little baby in her arms. And just then the other two came back. What would you have done, Peter?"

Peter's body had stiffened.

"If he was like Aleck Curry—I'd—I'd have killed him," he said.

Simon drew in a deep, slow breath.

"And that is just what happened, Peter.

Donald killed him. He didn't mean to do it. It was an accident. But it happened. And the other man deserved it. He was better dead than alive. But it made a murderer of Donald, and they hang murderers. So the older man cared for the woman and the baby for three years, while Donald hid himself in the forests. Then—Helen died. And Donald came back and took the boy, and for years after that the law didn't know where he was, and they were happy together, and would always have been happy if the law hadn't found him again, and—" Simon's voice choked. His arm hugged Peter until it hurt. And then he finished, almost whispering the last words, "Peter, I know it's all true, because the older man's name was Simon McQuarrie—and I'm Simon McQuarrie—and—the boy's name—was Peter."

It was out. He bowed his grizzled cheek to the boy's face and fought hard to choke back the thickening in his throat. It seemed a long time to him that Peter did not move or speak. But he could feel the tremble of the boy's body, and he knew that Peter understood.

"So he won't come back," he said, trying to bring a note of comfort into his strained voice. "At least not for a long time, Peter. And he wants you to live with me. That's what he wrote on the paper you brought in the bottle."

Still Peter did not speak. He was staring through the door, and it was hard for Simon to find more words. "We'll take good care of you here, Peter."

Then Peter spoke. "Dad won't come back tonight or tomorrow?"

"No."

"Nor ever?"

"Maybe he'll come, but it will be a long time."

"And they're after him, like they were back there in the woods. They want to—hang him?"

"They won't catch him, Peter. That is why he left you here. He can travel faster without you and is safe right now. But

we must tell no one else about him. We must keep it all between ourselves."

Peter slipped out quietly from under Simon's arm. He had no more questions to ask, and Simon made no effort to follow him as he went out into the last glow of the day. Slowly Peter walked past the mill and the yellow sawdust piles toward the edge of the clearing. But he no longer took notice of the sunset glow or the twitter of birds or wondered at the molten gleam of the Middle Finger. He entered into the shadowing twilight of the forest and for the first time a sob broke from his dry lips. Then he called his father's name aloud, and the silence that followed emptied his heart of its last hope. He sank down in a huddled heap beside a tree, and his grief found vent in a low sobbing that broke strangely and terribly in the gloomy stillness of the trees. It was in this hour that Peter needed the comfort of a woman's arms. His world was gone. Without his father he wanted to die. The darkness crept closer about him. And then a little hand, timid, soft, touched his cheek. "Peter!"

It was Mona. Her beautiful eyes were glowing softly at him in the dusk as he raised his head to look at her through his tears. She knelt down beside him, and he choked back his sobs, struggling to hide his grief and his tears from her. And then Buddy the pup snuggled under his arm. Mona was dabbing at his eyes again with her little handkerchief, and her voice was soft and sweet in its mothering gentleness.

It was then Peter forgot Simon's warning, and there in the deepening gloom of the forest, with Mona close beside him, he told what it was in his heart to tell—all about the police, and the fight and the running away, and now the losing of his father. "There isn't anyone else but my dad," he half sobbed, "I haven't got anything now—an' I wish I was dead!" "You don't," she reproved, her two hands holding one of his own tightly, "and you *have* got someone. You've got me. I'll take care of you. I will, Peter. I promise. And you can have Buddy, and all my pets—everything I've got. And—he will come back. Your father, I mean. All we got to do is wait. Why, your father is alive and he *can* come back," she said straight from the heart. "Mine can't. He is dead. And so is my mother."

An emotion new and strange swept over Peter—a flash of dawning manhood stirred to mysterious life by that note of something which had come from Mona's lips, a woman of the future whispering to him, chivalry calling, a boy's soul and a girl's rising for a moment above their years to point out the way to a new tomorrow. Peter's heart grew warm. He rose to his feet, and Mona stood beside him. In the darkness they were very close.

"I guess you're right," he said. "Dad won't stay away very long. And I—I'm sorry about your father and mother, Mona. And if Aleck Curry bothers you again, or kicks the dog—"

And so they went back through the dusk to Five Fingers, and this time it was Peter who held firmly to Mona's hand.

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(Continued from page 41)

How I worked when I was a young woman down here to get ourselves out of it, and now I got myself out of it how I eat my heart to be back in it. My boy was *bar mizvah* down here. My husband made us a living down here. My happiest days in my life I spent down here with my people—with my Shule—with my family—right over there. You see, Molla—Abraham Naftel—for twelve years every Friday morning of my life I bought pike and bass from him for my *gefullte* fish. He remembers me, what you bet, if I go in? Hurry, Molla—I want you should see where my baby was born."

Old Mrs. Palestine, suddenly full of young little running steps, two long raspberry ovals of color out in her cheeks, the foulard dress ballooning as she hurried: Tears. Tears. Thick lenses of them.

The house in Division Street was as lean as a witch. Human bodies lax, like pillows over sills, dangling and shouting from windows. That dingy and perpetual banner of poverty, the family wash-line, kicking and writhing. There was a poultry store on the ground floor. Furious smells of chicken blood and hot fuzz, and on the high stoop, like a brooding conclave of the shawled women of the East, half a dozen old crones in white headkerchiefs, and burning back deeply in them—deeply, burningly back—tired Old Testament eyes.

Suddenly Mrs. Palestine's legs gave out under her. They would not climb that stoop. Twice with Molla's sturdy hand at her elbow she raised her foot for the first step and twice her knees doubled under, until finally she crumpled up on the first step, leaning her face against the railing to cry.

"I can't go no farther. I'm too happy. I'm home. This is my stoop. I don't know no more these faces, but this is my stoop."

And the snow of hot fuzz blew against her lips, and children gathered around, and the Biblical old women with their peering faces and dead leaf hands came down the steps. Then came an avalanche of words. Words. A torrent of words that were new and alien to Molla. Down off the chute of Mrs. Palestine's tongue, tumbling in Yiddish. Coal off a chute. Clatter. Clatter. And the circle of the old women closed in. And the day grew hotter and higher and the din ground itself against the flesh like grime and Molla sat by waiting. *Oi-oi*, the thin quail voices of the old women. The dry old women, past childbearing, with the dry eyes and the dry breasts and the dry tears. The jargon of Yiddish ran in a tide. The day was on the down side before she could pry Mrs. Palestine from the hot high stoop.

Through the heat dance all the lean houses seemed to have wavy walls and it was not easy to manipulate Mrs. Palestine back again on to the street car. But finally she made the hoist and plumped down inside.

Except for the sighs which blew and blew off the twisted old frags of lips, she seemed to doze, with her fist plunged deep into Molla's palm and throbbing there.

"You seen, Molla—my people—those are my people—and his—our people, Molla. Who are your people?"

"My people?" She looked at Mrs.

Palestine softly, the wide lips falling apart to smile. "My people? Why, those are my people—out there," she said. Her eyes were very blue and her lips fumbled to say more. "Those are my people. Out there. Everywhere."

It was the last time the old woman ever left the house. August roared on, and Palestine and his wife returned. The old woman resumed her long motionless watches in the shadowy arch between the folding doors. Sitting there during the long merriments of the poker game, her dry eyes forever focused upon her son, they would seem to smear into a single tearless and reproachful orb in the center of her forehead.

"Gives me the jimjams—her sitting there," was a frequent *sotto voce* of May.

"Mama dear, don't you think you had better let Molla take you to bed? We're going to play a round of rudles yet and you must be tired."

"I'm all right, son."

Once a guest, a Mr. McGuire, who was a frequent visitor, swung around in his chair to her. "Come on, grandma, have one of these kosher ham sandwiches. They're kosher, ain't they, Palestine?"

Oh. Oh. Oh. The poor dried prunes of eyes in Mrs. Palestine's head. They seemed to have died there.

One January noon when there were pork chops snapping on the stove for luncheon, Mrs. Palestine was suddenly missing from her chair beside the window in her room. She left there less and less now and never without the hoist of Molla's arm.

"Mrs. Palestine—the old woman—she's not in her room! I can't find her!"

May was drying her hair in a great fan that spread in a patch of cold sunlight on the sill. "She's not far. No such luck."

Sure enough, Molla finally discovered her shivering and crying on the fire escape, where she had climbed with an agility that frenzy alone could have given her.

"Mrs. Palestine, you must come in from the cold."

"Let her stay out there, Molla. She'll soon get enough of it if she sees she can't spite me by one of her loony fits."

"Quick—come in right away. That is not nice to sit in the cold."

"I can't stand it. She should cut out my heart to get rid of me, but I can't stand it I should have to spend my days in such a household where my son's home is made every minute an insult to his religion. It's like my own heart was frying with them pork chops. She don't like pork chops, Molla. I've heard her tell it to the poker loafers how she don't like them, but has them to see how excited I can get . . . That God should find me in such a house like this. Julius—who wanted his boy to be a rabbi—"

Molla coaxed her in, dragging her a chair for the step from sill to floor, and full of little urgings—"There—now—so—"

"It would be better, Molla, if I die tomorrow. Then I don't stand any more in my son's way or my daughter-in-law's."

"No. No, Mrs. Palestine."

"It's not good, Molla, a woman should got to stand between such a good son's

happiness with his wife like I do. My poor son—he don't know which he should be first. My son or her husband. I'm in the way, Molla. Nobody knows it better as I do. I'm in the way . . . Molla . . . never leave me, Molla."

She needed Molla so. Even the absurd fashion in which she pronounced her name was like a cry in the dark. A little winged sob that could beat its way and nest in Molla's heart, where it hurt. Sometimes at night, long after the lights were out, the cry would come through to her, and down she would tiptoe and curl up at the foot of the old woman's bed, ponderous as a mastiff.

Palestine was grateful. He had her come down to his retail store to be fitted for two fine strong pairs of bluchers, and as she went out with the package under her arm, he said: "Never leave my mother, Molla; and you won't regret it. She's a little peculiar in her ways and her ways aren't my wife's ways—but a better woman doesn't breathe. Never leave her, Molla."

"Yah—sure—never—"

Poor Palestine. It was as if a wire cage had curved itself somehow about him, with the egress woven cunningly into the mesh. He was in and the two women with him, making a prison of what, with either of them alone, might have been a nest.

Constantly, as that winter dragged through, there were half-moons in May's hands where the finger nails bit in, and her toes in the showy short-vamp shoes were always climbing over each other in suppression of a nervous rage.

One day she ran from the luncheon table into the clothes closet in her bedroom. It was horrible. Because she bit at the empty sleeves of gowns hanging there, tore fabrics, jerked hangers from their hooks, trampled on Palestine's dressing gown, kicked until she bruised her shoes and toes against the wall and finally half collapsed in a hurricane of garments.

It had happened trivially. Something like this.

About noon a fog had descended over the city. One of those gray smotherers that roll in off the sea. There was something extremely cozy about the indoors on a day like this. Molla prepared tea and fluffed up an egg omelette with a fusty sense of that warm indoor coziness. May had been stacking chips for a poker party that night. She was playing practically every afternoon now, losing large sums which were the subject of heated controversy with Pal, and five evenings out of the week there were games at the house, too.

This day she wore a pink flannel wrapper and her hair was in curl rags that rose off her head like a shriek. She had a headache, too.

"Got it too good," was the old woman's under her breath diagnosis of the almost daily ritual of cold compress or headache powder. Luncheon was a meal to dread, the two women alone, without the intermediary influence of Palestine.

When May in the pink flannel wrapper entered the fog-swimming dining room, she switched on the lights, seven high-power ones in the colored glass dome over the table.

"Give me a tablet in a glass of water first, Molla. My head's splitting."

Then old Mrs. Palestine came in, stiffly, in her black calico house dress



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dotted with white four leaf clovers and carrying a bowl of thick black lentil soup which she had warmed from a specially prepared crock of it that she kept.

"Say, May, since when have we got a stand-in with the electric light company? If I can find my mouth in the middle of the day, you should find yours with your younger eyes"; and with a good humor which she valiantly tried to simulate for the trial of these noonday meals together, the old woman clicked out the lights again just as May gulped down the headache tablet. The almost reflex act of a woman who for a period of thirty thirty years had run her own home; and with that same reflex of a woman bound in turn to run hers, May, with the fuzz of fog in a whirlpool of anger about her, sprang to the wall, clicking the lights back again.

"You dare," she cried with her lips lifting back dryly off her teeth, "you dare to dictate to me when I can have light in my own house and when I can't!"

The old woman had a way of appearing to shrivel and to yellow under the lash of her daughter-in-law's tongue. She seemed to recede to a point.

"Is that the way, May, a daughter-in-law should talk to her husband's mother, nearly three times her age, and who didn't mean nothing but a little economy?"

"Economy my hind foot! I'd like to see you or anybody like you tell me when I can have the electric light on in my house and when I can't. Not while my dress buttons up the back with tiddiewinks."

"Maybe, May, if you didn't know everything for yourself so well and would let an old woman three times your age help—"

"Not you! You can't tell me nothing I don't know already."

"I can tell you that a good dutiful wife don't squander her husband's money away on gambling debts and matinées—a good man like him who stands on his bunions all day long earning it for you—"

"You keep your gab out of my affairs. You've done enough damage in this house as it is. My husband is my business."

"Your husband is my son!"

"More's the pity."

The shuddering, sucky, ligament-twisting cry of the mothers of sons bearing them. That was the kind of moaning noise Mrs. Palestine made as she went down into a little huddle on a dining room chair.

"Mrs. Palestine!"

"Let 'er alone, Molla. I'm used to those bluffs. I've seen her topple over into those fake faints for years now. Temper, that's all. She's tough as tripe."

"Oh, why don't I die?"

"The whine-fest will now begin."

"Mrs. Palestine—she bane old—"

"Let her alone, Molla, I said. Hands off! That's the trouble now. Her out there in the kitchen with you all day crying for sympathy. I'm sick of it. Pal's got to decide between her and me and pretty quick too. I wish to Heaven I could go off somewhere and live in one room and never have to clap eyes on the whole shebang again. He'll have to settle good and heavy on me, too—mind you that. Matzoth house, that's what I call this. Well, thank God, I wasn't raised no matzoth eater!"

"No, no. Belittle me. Belittle even my boy—but don't make little my

religion—don't make little my God because he is not your God."

"God! Who said anything about your God? Matzoth is what I said, and I say it again. Matzoth house. Two stoves. Two sets of dishes. Matzoth crumbs all over the house so I have to be ashamed to have company at my own table for matzoth. Matzoth. He likes 'em too—dips 'em in coffee like—slop. Once a matzoth dunker always a matzoth dunker."

"Julius, my husband! Junior, my son! My men! I can't keep it shut up in me no more. I can't live here no more. To have to see with every hour I live everything what is sacred to me and to mine made little. Papa, where are you up there? Let me come to you. Help me, Julius!"

May swung heavily into her chair. She was like a storm, her eyebrows seeming to meet and click in a furrow above her nose.

"Well," she said, flopping the omelette, which had fallen, on to her plate and jabbing into it with her fork, "here is where I am let in for another pleasant lunch hour. It's a wonder I don't croak of indigestion."

"Oh—oh—if only my son would let me rent somewhere a little room off by myself where I can live alone and die alone!"

"Well, he won't, so what you going to do about it? Dutiful son! I wish he'd try a little dutiful husband on me."

"You say that! The woman for whose extravagances my son works day and night his fingers to the bone—a boy what never in his life played a card or took more as a drink of sassaparilla before."

"My ways suit my husband when you ain't around to poison him."

"Mark my word, May, the kind of love my boy has for you—it ain't the kind that lasts. The woman who puts by something of herself for the day when her husband gets tired of the flesh and has a big fine companionship waiting for him is the smart woman. I won't do nothing to come between you—but—"

"Oh no! Oh no! You only started by doing everything in the world to keep him from marrying me."

"Yes, maybe, because he was all mine then and I had the right to fight for what I thought was his happiness, but after he did it, never one word—"

"Hah—you make me laugh! You got the nerve to say that when you can cut the hate in this house with a knife! Who do you think your son is, anyhow? When I married him there was fellas wanting to buy my meal ticket that could buy and sell him six ways for Sunday. And they wasn't kosher meals, neither."

"I can't hear that word no more so abused! It's like salt in a sore. Oh—oh—oh—if not for my son, I would right away pack my things. Why did he pull me up away from my people down there? These ways ain't my ways—those are my people—he should let me go back."

"Well, no insinuations, but you can take it from me if he didn't always have you nagging him over to your ways I could make him a darn sight happier than he's ever been in his life before. He'd be a live one, that son of yours—if he dared."

"That just goes to show! A woman with her thoughts on her home and her husband's interests and—and children—don't got time for such shennanigan talk like her husband should be a—*a live one.*"

"You're going to ram that children talk

down my throat once too often. I'll have children when I get good and ready to have children and not before."

"A woman shouldn't put her time for it before God's time for it."

"If—if you weren't his mother and—old—I'd drive you out of the house for less than that."

"Why don't you? It would make it easier than I should walk out from my son's house on my own—"

"Well then—I do! You can't stay here day after day to devil the life and soul out of me. I won't stand it! I—now—you—go!"

"God—papa—God—son—no—no—it ain't possible I should live to see it—out from my own son's home—"

"Yes—yes—out of your own son's home—driven out by the devil in you—"

"Oh, Mrs. Palestine—she bane old—oh—oh—oh, Mrs. Palestine—"

"And you! Square-head, you! Lump! Who are you, anyhow? There's something about you gives me the jimjams. For all I know you're one of those still ones that run deep. How do I know you're not taking sides with the old woman and running to my husband with lies? Go—the two of you—the quicker the better—go—go—go—"

It was then, because the words in her throat were a mere strangle and her hands were curved and spread out like claws, that May ran screaming to the clothes closet, dragging the garments in their avalanche of fury down about her, and gasping, choking, spluttering.

Toward dusk Molla began to try to feed the old woman soup out of a spoon.

"Can't swallow. Leave me alone, Molla. I'm an old woman put out from my own son's house. Where shall I go, Molla? No. No. I won't go. Nobody can drive me out from my son who needs me and who has lost his God."

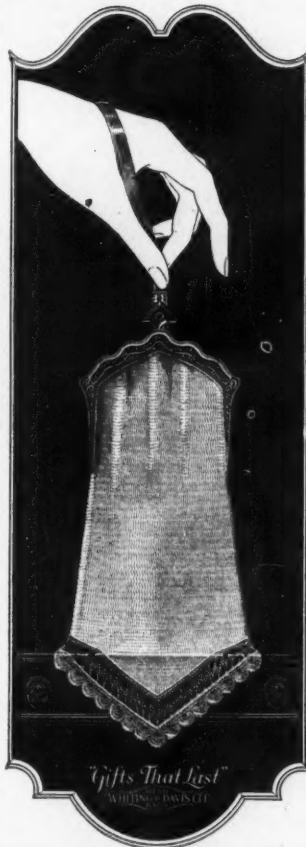
There was no suppressing the mother of Palestine. Oppress her, yes, but the light of the children of Israel was like a campfire in her eyes and would not be ground out.

It was bitter to stay, and the lips of the mother of Palestine were twisted as old paint tubes with that bitterness.

The old woman slept finally. At seven Palestine would come. There was dinner to be prepared. Molla had a sly little procedure before dinner. It was to draw together two of the most comfortable chairs in the living room, chummily, as if two women had been sewing and gossiping there during the long quiet of an afternoon. The look of strain and of drain would run out of his face when he walked in on evidences of what might indicate that a day of rare tranquillity had rolled over the household.

Molla dragged the two chairs together and they squealed on their castors. May was stretched asleep on the sitting room couch, her cheeks still wet and her lips flat and heavy, and always with the sensuous look of just having been kissed very hard—slightly, rather appealingly apart. One of her hands trailed to the floor and there was a pale scatter of freckles on her arm—great isolated ones, so large and far apart that Palestine could run his lips up it as if it were a flute, kissing them one by one.

When he finally did turn his key in the



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lock, it was as if May, so deeply simulating sleep, had been merely lying on the edge of it waiting, so quickly she pounced at him, the castle of her yellow puffs collapsed and down over one ear, and sure enough her right eye dragged upward from lying on it.

"May! My dear—"

"Yah, 'dear'—you'd better 'dear' me—leaving me shut up here day after day with a lunatic. Well, you don't need to go no further to hear her side of the story with her lies, lies, lies! You can hear it right here from me. Either that old woman gets out of this house—here—now—tonight—or I go! You can take your choice. As God is my witness—I'm through!"

All the little wrinkles came running into his face like sand over paper, and he tried to take her in his arms.

"Oh no, you don't! Not this time. A few smooth words can't make up for the all day hell of living in this house. That old woman goes or I go! I couldn't stand another day of it. You've been a long time choosing, but you've got to choose now! I've tried. I've bit my tongue in two trying—but I'm done."

"Why, May," he said in the sedative tone that must have worn a little rut along his vocal chords from the repetition of it. "I know that ma's not easy—and there's not a day that I don't think of my girl at home under conditions that aren't just right for her—but she's old, May, and she means well and—and good heavens, May—a man's mother is a man's mother, little eccentricities and all."

"No—no—we ain't going to argue any more, not while my dress buttons up the back with tiddlewinks. I've been over it all till I'm as crazy loony as she is. You gotta decide—this time it's me or her!"

His nose was like a blade, the nostrils sort of drawn in by the sharpness of his breath, and he stood under the hall light, growing paler and paler as the fatigue lines deepened.

"May—you've never been like this. Has anything unusual happened? My mother—how—where is she?"

"Oh no! Nothing unusual. Just the usual. That's the devil of it! Just the usual—but the camel's back broke today. There's no argument. There's just for you to decide which of us gets out."

He looked at her and at the shine of her flesh up at him through the lace of her bodice and the old familiar trembling seized him, but he dug in his nails through his palms and his words were all crowded behind his teeth, which were clenching.

"Well then, by heavens—you go!"

It was as if he had stabbed her in the upthrust of bosom she could always dazzle him with, because she threw out her arms and stood like a great open fan with the finery of her sleeve drapes falling to the floor.

"Me!"

"You," he said. "Yes—yes—you—"

"You don't mean that—Pal."

"I do," he said, still with the jam of words behind his teeth.

For the first time her body sort of unbound itself of its tight theatricalism and she looked at him with her mouth shaped to cry out, but it only quivered and formed a rhomboid.

"If anybody goes out of this house, it's not going to be my mother. Get that! I

may be low—but not that low. She stays here!"

There was a pause that was full of their breathing, and then with a lightning gesture she darted out for his hand, but he was too quick for her.

"No," he said, holding it behind him. "No, none of that."

She darted again and he looked at her coldly and smiled, holding himself on a little oblique that eluded her.

"That don't go this time, May. I'm at the end of my rope here. You have been called upon to make certain sacrifices. I know that. And I don't say they have always been easy ones. But that's part of this game of marriage. Learning to take the hurdles. You haven't taken yours. There's no argument here. Between two women one of them young and able to take care of herself and the other seventy years old and—my mother—well, if it's a case of one of them having to go, it's not going to be my mother! Get that! Get that! Not going to be my mother! This is one of those deadlocks in marriage where there is no solution. A woman either gives in or she—don't. You don't!"

With his body thrust back from her, the words in her mouth were meal, and she knew it; and suddenly with a sinuosity that was rare with her she had her arms about his knees and her cheek to him and her sobs coming so that even through the fabric her warm breath reached him.

"Pal!"

He wrenched himself, but the vise of her arms was relentless, and so with his head held up and his body still tense he stood taut, feeling the tremor of her body and finally the wet of her tears—warm—warm—against his knee.

"Get up," he said, with his head back and his body away from her.

"Pal—Pal—don't—don't throw me off for her—Pal—"

"Off! Good heavens, what's a man to do—murder an old woman to get her out of the way of a young one? God—God—what mess have I let myself into! May—don't—"

"Pal"—her hands were up now against his waistcoat so that the shape of them burned through, and his face, which he kept averted, was reddening, a slow red that ran down into his collar.

"You can't get me that—way—any—more," he said and caught her two hands by the wrists and flung her backward; but she was too quick for him again, and as if from the momentum of the shove she was back again, with her arms about his neck this time, and her lips which were shining with tears straight and pat against his.

"No—no—May—none of that—no—I say—oh—"

Suddenly it was quiet, and when he lifted his head she was crouched in a cradle his arms made for her, and the tears were running heavily down his cheeks.

"I'm tired," he said, crying frankly and daubing his eyes with the back of her hand, "dog—dog tired," and sank down on a chair in the hallway. She dragged up a stool, an outlandish one on the four curved horns of a bull, and her arms were about his knees again and her shining lips always close enough for him to feel the breath.

"You love me, Pal—I love you. What's the use—you can't give me up—"

He beat his knees.

"God! God! Was ever a man in my plight? I can't give you up. Well, where does that get me? I can't give her up. My home a ha-ha. I'm cursed with you and I'm cursed without you. Was ever a man in such torment? I can't come home—I'll be the one to get out—I'll end it—I'll be the one to get out—"

"Pal—Pal, that won't solve anything—that will bust it up for all three. I've got a way out for us, Pal—it's the old woman. I tell you—she's got to go!"

"And I tell you, no! My mother doesn't pine out her days alone in a rooming house—"

"No—no, Pal—you don't understand. Why, the old woman's sick, Pal—her mind's sick—the old woman needs a hospital—a fine, sunny, big hospital where they can take care of her—"

Her eyes were very round and glossed over with tears and her ten fingers very soft against his cheeks, and always her breathing so he could feel its fanning warmth.

"My mother's not sick. She's—she's old. She's orthodox and she believes so strong it makes her eccentric. She's not sick—"

"She is, Pal. Any doctor would say so. You don't see her all day in the house like I do. You're making me live with—a lunatic, Pal."

"You—take that back!"

"You don't know it. But I do. She sits all day talking to herself. I'm afraid of her. I wouldn't ask you to throw her out, Pal—I'm telling you she's got screws loose—she can get violent any time and then you will have trouble. There's institutions—fine, sunny, clean ones. She ought to be committed. It's the only way, Pal—to save her—and to save us. You want us to go to hell over a—a loon. Lots of people go crazy on religion. The old woman, Pal—has screws loose. It's against the law not to give her medical treatment."

"There's plenty places, Pal—fine, clean places where they don't even know they're in that kind of a place where she can live in peace and we can stay here in peace. Pal, are you going to throw me over for a poor old woman that's lost her mind? I tell you she's crazy, Pal. What'll you have out of it if I get out and leave you here with a loon? You got to support me—no man can get away without doing his duty to me—you got her and you got me any way you look at it. If one of us got to go—the poor crazy old lady ought to be the one. Get her in a—a hospital, Pal—and that'll leave us here—in our home—together. Pal—poor, tired Pal—home alone—here with his May."

His head fell down against the little cove of her shoulder and he could feel her warm kisses through his hair, and finally when he looked up with the stricken eyes of a St. Bernard dog, the tears ran down over his words.

"I can't give you up, May. My poor mother—she's sick—she needs the best of care—best—institution. She's sick—and she's got to go—"

Tears. Tears. The dining room looked crazy through the blur of them, and setting out the salt cellars and the vinegar cruet, Molla Ivanu could scarcely find the table. It wavered up at her. Tilted. Ran in little ripples that



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the tears made. Tears. Tears. The old woman—

She ran down the hall. It shot off in a little ell and on the slant of wall was the door—the door that was between the old woman and the knowing. The bitter knowing that must presently creep toward it and under it like a terrible tide. Molla crashed through the door and stood trembling in the center of the room.

The night light was burning and the old woman flew up in her vast walnut bed with a cry.

"Son—who—*ach*, Molla, how you frightened me! I must have been dreaming. My son! My Julius—Molla—it ain't nice you should rush in so on me—you've made me a pain—here. What is it, Molla—nothing ain't wrong? Pal—home yet? Nothing ain't wrong?"

"Why—no—Mrs. Palestine—nothing—I yoost looked in a minute. Maybe you want something?"

"No—I—Molla—you shouldn't rush in so—a pain here—from the fright you gave me—such a pain—my heart—*ach*, no—Molla—I can't lay down. It's a knife in me. You frightened me so—my heart—"

Her face was so little, and back in the frill of her cap a pointed sort of receding look had set in, and she writhed up from the support of Molla's arm.

"My drops—quick, Molla—my drops—I—you shouldn't have frightened me—quick—my drops from the doctor."

There they stood, the little colorless phial of them on the table beside the bed. Five of them—Molla knew how—drop-drop-drop-drop—in a tumbler.

"Molla—please—"

"No, Mrs. Palestine—no—yoost—lay still. No—no—drops this time—sleep—sh-h-h—no drops—sleep."

"I—my drops—pain—I—I'm so tired, Molla—hold me—you frightened me so. I was dreaming—my boy—she didn't get him—away from me. She tried, Molla—I dreamed—but she didn't—he wouldn't—my boy—he stuck to his mama. She's old—she's in the way—but he stuck. Why don't you give me my drops, Molla? I—he stuck by his mama, Molla—"

"Yes, Mrs. Palestine—he stuck—"

"I—I was never so tired. My drops—you should give me my drops. Dark—Molla—yes, Julius—tired—he stuck—my boy—to his mama—not, Molla?"

"Yes, Mrs. Palestine—yes—"

"Tired—my drops—son—oh—God—ouch—oh—oh—ah—"

A sudden lurch forward in Molla's arms so that her torso rounded up and left an arch of space between it and the bed.

It was so hard to unbend it because the body had stiffened so, and with her cheek to Mrs. Palestine's heart Molla pressed gently until the little attitude of convulsion had straightened. It was so quiet there with her cheek to Mrs. Palestine's dead heart.

A doctor folded the brittle hands. Little gulls skimming the placid old breast. The preliminaries of death were set in motion. A soul had been set free and mortals were solemn. Almost immediately the shades somehow were down and there was a new odor. The odor of death. May had gone out like a flame. Her face seemed suddenly very small between the two enormous

blobs of pearl earrings, and she had pinned up the flowing sleeves so that she had the plucked, necky look of a fine bird that has lost its feathers revealing the long pores of dingy flesh.

"Poor Pal! Poor Pal!"

He looked at her through tear-scalded eyes that did not see her at all.

"My mother—my poor little mother—gone without a word—"

"Lots of them go that way, Pal. My old woman died in her sleep—"

"What her poor little life must have been here alone in this room—nights. Mama, forgive me. Mama, forgive me."

"She was a good sleeper, Pal. I used to hear her snoring and always tiptoe by the door—I was always careful not to wake her."

May, craven with death.

He looked at her with his eyes twisted out of focus and kept repeating over and over again his phrases. "Mama, forgive me—poor little life—I knew what you suffered, mama—there wasn't an hour of the day or night it wasn't over me—I did it—I did it—mama, mama, forgive—why did you leave me?"

"Pal—you've got your May—poor, poor Pal—don't cry—ain't you got your May?"

He kissed her then wildly, his wet lips smearing over her cheeks, the twisted, crazy look in his eyes.

"Help me—help me to bear my remorse. I used to snap her off. I never had patience with her. We left her alone when we went to the country—alone here. She might have died like a dog. She did die alone—like a dog—alone—"

"No, Pal. No. Molla was with her!"

"Molla! Then why didn't she give my mother her drops? She let her die like a dog. That's what the doctor asked—why didn't the person in whose arms she died—give her the drops? Murderer—where is she? Get out—where is she? I want her to get out!"

And Molla, carrying, down the gloom of the hallway, the seven-branch candlestick for the foot of old lady Palestine's bed, stood hearing, her face picked out in light above the pointing flames. A white face, floating in shadow and shining out of the darkness that poured around it.

A clear, prophetic face above the seven lights.

It was then, gazing upon her, that Palestine turned on his wife and struck her three times on the very cheek that his lips had smeared.

"Mama," he screamed, "forgive me!" and smoking hot off his lips and trembling with fervor for them came words that had long since lain dead like dried rose leaves in his memory.

ברוך אלהינו שבראנו לכבודו

Then he turned around on May. He was laughing now, and she bent from that laughter in terror.

"You go," he said with his hands held out in talons and his fingers curling inward to form little cages. "Go—go—while God gives me strength not to kill you! My mama—my God—my darling, heart-broken mama. You made me a traitor to her—you—you—you! My little mama—go—go—or so help me God—if ever I see you again—God strike me dead if I don't kill you!"

"Pal—don't—don't—let me loose—I'll go, Pal—leave me go, Pal—for God's sake—I'll go—Pal."

After a while it was quiet in the house. There was still the little frangipani scent of May in her room where she had fussed about in the hysteria of packing; it followed her trail along the hallway as she backed down it in terror, her little valise, with the twist of lace caught in the fastening, held out before her. Then the outer door—and out.

Quiet. With the light from the seven candles burning against the transom and out into the hall so palely and Palestine silent in there hour after hour, cramped up there against the bedside of his dead.

At midnight the first mourner sprang up—one of the Old Testament women off the stoop in Division Street; and from behind the closed door, when she slid in to join Palestine, her cry went down like a rapier into the heart of the silence.

A cry that stuck there to the hilt, and throbbed.

Toward morning the mourner slept on in a rocker at the foot of the old woman's bed. Palestine, who had never moved from his couch at the headboard, sprang up suddenly. His hair torn down over his face but his eyes clear.

"Molla!" he called and ran out into the hallway and into her room. "Molla—you—you knew—Molla—you cook! Who are you? Molla—Molla—come back—Molla—Molla . . ."

At that moment, in a dawn that ran thinly along the edge of the roofs, Molla Ivanü with her carpet bag hooked to her fingers was walking. East. A wettish wind, the wind before the dawn, blew her all forward. Her skirts. Some strands of her paling yellow hair and the terribly dilapidated old rose on her hat.

There were no pedestrians. Not even milk carts yet. Only Molla, walking before the wind.

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The Knife

(Continued from page 91)

herself into the warm, strong water.

And at once she was immensely soothed and calmed. She dried herself in the sun, dressed, and an hour later returned to where Arrentrue was loafing in the sand. She was in better temper after her swim, and for the first time since they had landed on the beach felt glad that she had not gone down with the yacht.

"Well," she said, "I took your advice and went in swimming."

"Swimming?" he asked. "Can you swim?"

"Of course."

"That's funny," he said. "I can't. Most sailors can't. They don't get no chance to learn."

It comforted Miss Allison to know this. The fact that she could swim and that he couldn't gave her, in addition to the knife, a certain desperate advantage over him.



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If the worst came to the worst she might be able to put deep water between herself and him, and drown respectably.

Arrentrue's costume consisted of a shirt and trousers. The shirt had lost two buttons, and Miss Allison had glimpses of a body as fine and white as a woman's. Arrentrue caught the direction of her eye and pulled his shirt together with a provoking gesture of offended modesty. Miss Allison was furious. She hadn't meant to look. But she had looked without really knowing that she was looking, and she had wondered to herself where, if the worst ever came to the worst, she ought to make trial with her knife.

She knew very little about anatomy, but judging from her own she believed that the place to try for was just below the curling of the ribs, where the body, her own at least, appeared to be as defenseless as a custard pudding.

She hoped that she would never be called upon to stab Arrentrue, but if she were called upon she did not propose to bungle the business.

For a girl who had been brought up in Newport and New York and Paris and London to be looking at a man with a view to determining where he could best be stabbed, suddenly touched her humor, and she smiled.

"Bet you don't know what I'm thinking about," she said.

Arrentrue shook his head. "I guess it's about me," he said. "Something about me has struck you as funny. You was looking at me with a terrible cross look, and all of a sudden you smiles. Is it about me?"

She nodded.

"It's about you. But it isn't especially funny. You are bigger and stronger than the average man, and yet the least little hurt in the right place would make you as helpless as a child."

"A man kicked me in the kneecap once," said Arrentrue, "and I fainted dead away. Maybe if he'd kicked me a quarter of an inch one side or the other it wouldn't 'a' hurt me a bit."

"Ever do any fighting?" asked Miss Allison.

He nodded.

"I've give knockouts," he said, "and took 'em."

"You get knocked out from being hit here, don't you?" asked Miss Allison, and she tapped her chin lightly.

"Yes. And here," said Arrentrue, and he tapped that part of his body which was immediately below the ribs. "That's the solar plexus," he explained, "and if mine hadn't been made of glass I'd never have quit fighting. There's more money in fighting than sailing."

Miss Allison smiled again. She would now in an emergency have more than guesswork to go on. The sailor had actually specified his most vulnerable point.

Nevertheless, her fear of him grew until it became a kind of mania. After dark she would slip with her possessions from one cave to another, and thereafter, before she dared sleep, she would listen by the hour for the menacing sound of his feet stumbling about among the rocks, hunting for her.

And often she heard them—or thought she did.

The food which they had to eat was not satisfying, and it was nearly always

hunger which caused Miss Allison to wake so early in the morning. Often before sunrise, when the tide permitted, she and Arrentrue might have been seen knee-deep in black salt mud grubbing for clams.

But one morning Arrentrue did not join her at the digging. The sun rose and warmed her and she made her breakfast without him. His failure to appear at the usual time annoyed her. It annoyed her in spite of the fact that she kept telling herself that she didn't care if he never appeared.

By ten o'clock she was worried and had a sense of loneliness so keen that it resembled pain. All her fear and horror of him was forgotten.

She passed then slowly before that portion of the cliff in which the caves were, calling to him. Every few feet she stopped and called to him.

"Arrentrue! O Arrentrue! . . . Where are you? . . . What's wrong? . . . Are you sick?"

Sea birds answered her, and the echoes of her own voice.

Suddenly she saw a slender stake of driftwood driven into the sand before the mouth of a cave. The sand had been trampled by Arrentrue's feet and in the upper end of the stake was a cleft in which a folded piece of dirty white paper was tightly and securely pinched.

On this paper the sailor had composed a letter with a very dull pencil:

I'm going to take a chance right out across the desert. Maybe I'll get to some place and maybe I'll just lay down and die. Anythings better than laying awake nights listening for your footsteps, and thinking every second you'll come sneaking in to stick me with that big knife. Many a time I've watched from the top of the cliff and seen you a-sharpening of it and a-trying out the point on your thumb. I ain't looking for no trouble and I'm off.

T. B. Arrentrue

P. S. If I'm wrong and you don't mean me no harm and want me to come back lite a fire on top of the cliff and if I see it I'll come. T. A.

It is to Miss Allison's credit that she acted quickly. She knew that long since Arrentrue had made a collection of wood at the top of the cliff so that any ship which might chance into the offing could be signaled, and pausing only long enough to secure some matches from their slender store, she hurried to the place.

Arrentrue had not only made a large collection of wood but he had laid a fire which needed only to be lighted.

But although Miss Allison had up till now been in a breathless hurry—now she hesitated.

If Arrentrue came back it would be upon the understanding that he was not to be harmed. Lighting the fire, Miss Allison thought, and rightly, would be like putting her name to a contract, to a guarantee of immunity. She had always stood by her word. If she lighted that fire, and Arrentrue saw the smoke of it and came back, she would have deliberately and irrevocably placed herself in his power.

Match in hand and motionless, she stood for a long five minutes staring over the desert. Loneliness pierced her heart like some physical pain.

"Oh dear me," she said suddenly, "I've only got one life to live."

And she leaned over and struck the match upon a stone and lighted the fire.

She kept the fire going all day, and about sundown, very weary and thirsty with his desert wanderings, Arrentrue came back to her.

"There's been a misunderstanding," said Miss Allison, with a curious drawing room formality, "and—here's the knife."

She held it out to him handle first, and added: "And—and if you're not too tired and think you can do it without hurting me too much, I wish you'd bob my hair."

In the falling darkness, by the light of the fire, he made a good sailor-like job of the business. It required a masterly combination of strength and gentleness. When he had finished she put her hands to her head and gave him an appealing look.

"It feels lots better. I suppose it looks awful."

"It looks ship-shape," said Arrentrue.

There was a short silence.

"I suppose," Miss Allison then said, "we ought to be thinking about supper."

Arrentrue nodded, and as he rose he smiled in a bashful way and said:

"You ain't half so stuck up as I thought you was."

"Me? Oh, I'm really very humble! You don't know how humble I am."

When they had finished supper it was so dark that they could not see each other's faces.

Arrentrue cleared his voice and said:

"We ain't got much to go on in this here surroundings, but if we got any sense at all we'll just go ahead and make the most o' what we got."

After a little silence, and in a voice which shook in spite of his best efforts, he went on:

"Maybe you got more to make you feel mean than I got. But, miss, I got a girl in Brooklyn, and when I came home from this voyage we was going to be married and have a little duck farm . . . Some nights I don't sleep for thinkin' about her. I never liked any girl but her. But maybe you've got a feller waitin' fer you?"

"No," said Miss Allison, "I haven't. Nobody that really cares."

"My girl," said Arrentrue tenderly, "has only got one failing. She's dretful jealous. And I don't know what she'll say when she hears about us."

"But," said Miss Allison, and she shivered slightly, "do you think that she will ever hear about us? Do you seriously think that anybody ever will?"

"It's dreading what she *would* say if she ever *did* hear about us," said the sailor, "as makes me certain that she *will* hear about us. This world ain't big."

The gates of confidence being open, there passed through a whole flood of talk about the girl in Brooklyn. It was amusing at first. But after a few months of it Miss Allison was bored almost to tears.

And in the end, if a ship had not seen their smoke and taken them off, she might have gone crazy.

She never married.

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Never the Twain Shall Meet

(Continued from page 52)

CHAPTER IX

PROMPTLY at ten o'clock the Casson limousine deposited Maisie in front of the Pritchard residence. Dan, watching for her appearance from behind the front window curtains, observed that two young women and a fussy, somewhat threadbare little man of undoubted Hebraic ancestry emerged from the limousine and followed her up the stairs.

Julia opened the door and Maisie led her followers into the living room. "Good morning, Dan," she greeted him and gave him her hand. "I've brought half a dozen evening dresses which may or may not impress your ward; also a model to parade the dresses for Tamea's inspection, and a fitter to note the necessary alterations. Of course, she'll have to have some street clothes, so I've brought Rubenstein, my tailor, to take measurements."

"By Jupiter, Maisie, you're a marvel! You think of everything." He pressed Maisie's hand in his. "You may ask Miss Larrieau if she will be good enough to come down to the living room, Julia," he directed.

"I will go up with Julia," Maisie said, and followed the maid.

The Queen of Riva sat in a small, low chair before the window. She wore a dark silk dressing gown, which the democratic Julia had filched from Dan Pritchard's clothes closet, and she was gazing down into the street, gray and wet with fog. Her elbows rested on her knees, her face reposed in her hands, and she was weeping, silently and without a quiver. Julia went to her, patted her wet cheek and said:

"Look up, Tammy darlin'. Here is Miss Morrison to see you. Miss Morrison is the kind leddy that sint over the nice dhress for you last night, an' sure she has tailors an' cloak models and dhress-makers an' dhresses downstair waitin' for you."

Tamea dried her eyes, shook her wonderful hair back over her ivory brow, rose slowly and faced Maisie with a certain cool deliberation. Her eyes swept Maisie's figure; she forced a smile of greeting.

"I am—happy to—meet—Miss Morrison. When one is—almost—alone and very unhappy—kindness from a stranger is like the sun that comes to dry the sails, following a storm."

"Her greeting is as regal as her bearing," was Maisie's thought. She favored Tamea with a courteous little nod and her bright smile—then held out her hand. Tamea hesitated, then extended her own.

"You are Maisie?" she queried.
"Yes, I am Maisie. How did you know, Miss Larrieau?"

"I guessed," Tamea answered simply. "You are a much nicer woman than I had expected to meet."

Maisie flushed, partly with pleasure, partly with embarrassment. "I shall try to be nice to you, Miss Larrieau, always."

"You may call me Tamea, if you please. I shall call you Maisie."

"Will ye listen to that!" Julia declared happily. "Sure, Tammy's no different from the rest of us. She's in love wit' you at sight, Miss Morrison, so she is."

"I think with you, Tamea, that we

should dispense with formality. I shall be happy to be your friend and to help you to adjust your life to new conditions."

"I accept your friendship." Tamea's words came slowly, gravely. "You are not a woman of common blood."

Maisie stepped close to her, removed from her fingers the sodden little ball of a handkerchief and replaced it with a fresh one of filmy lace from her handbag. "Tell my chauffeur to go back to the house and fetch Celeste, my maid," she ordered Julia. "Between Celeste and me this wonderful hair shall be done exactly right. When you come upstairs again, Julia, bring up those boxes and the two girls in the living room. Rubenstein shall wait."

"Monsieur Dan Pritchard told me at breakfast that Miss Morrison would call to help me select the clothing which it is fit that I should wear in this country," said Tamea when they were alone.

"You are a brunette—one of the wonderful, olive-skinned type. With those great dark eyes and that wealth of jet-black hair you will look amazingly chic in something red and silvery or white. May I see your foot, Tamea?"

Tamea sat down and thrust out a brown foot. It was somewhat shorter and broader than Maisie had expected to see, but the arch was high and the toes perfect, with the great toe quite prehensile.

"You have gone barefoot a great deal, Tamea?"

"In Riva, always. In Tahiti I wore sandals."

"You will have to wear shoes here, Tamea. I think a number five will do, but we must be very particular not to spoil that foot. It is the only natural foot I have ever seen except on a baby. How old are you?"

"Eighteen."

Maisie could scarcely believe this statement. Physically Tamea was a fully developed woman, perhaps five feet seven inches tall, a creature of soft curves, yet lithe and graceful and falling just a trifle short of being slim. Her ears were delicately formed but of generous proportions, her neck, sturdy and muscular, swept in beautiful curves to meet a torso full-breasted and deep.

"Her form is perfect, and I believe she has a magnificent back," thought Maisie. "Her neck and head are Junoesque."

They were, indeed. Tamea's head, in shape, resembled her father's in that it was larger than that of most women, and of that width between the ears which denotes brain capacity and consequently intelligence. Her features were not small; indeed, they were almost large, but of patrician regularity and loveliness of line. Her brow was high and wide, her eyebrows fine, silken and thick, while her eyelashes were extraordinarily long, giving a slightly sleepy appearance to large, intelligent, beautiful eyes of a very dark brown shade—almost black. Her chin was well developed, firm; from behind full, red, healthy lips Maisie saw peeping fine, strong, white, regular teeth. Tamea's skin was clear to the point of near-transparency, and her hands were small with lovely tapered fingers.

"A perfect woman," thought Maisie.

"She is more than beautiful. She is magnificent—and when she has been dressed properly——"

Her thoughts were interrupted by the arrival of Julia and the cloak model and fitter. Thereafter, for an hour, Tamea dwelt in Paradise. Maisie's taste, in the matter of dress, was undoubtedly exquisite, and when she discovered that this exotic islander could wear with dignity raiment which, on another woman, would be regarded as flamboyant, Maisie felt that quiet joy which comes to all women who discover beauty or help to create it. Tamea, too, developed all of the interest of her sex in the beautiful garments submitted for her selection; so engrossing was that interest that by the time Rubenstein had departed Tamea's drooping spirits had been more than a little uplifted. She commanded Julia to summon Dan to admire such portions of her wardrobe as she had already selected.

"My dear, but you must wait until you are fully dressed," Mrs. Pippy cautioned her. Tamea was barefooted and wearing the skirt of a ready-made tailored suit, but not the coat; neither was she wearing waist or brassière.

"Why?" she demanded coolly. "Why should I demand of Monsieur Dan Pritchard that he wait upon my pleasure?"

"But you can't receive him half dressed."

Tamea, for answer, took from the dresser a large framed photograph of Maisie Morrison in evening dress. "Madoiselle Maisie was but half dressed when she had this photograph made. Julia, call Monsieur Dan Pritchard."

Mrs. Pippy's cold blue eye warned Julia that the price of obedience might be prohibitive. Julia hesitated.

Tamea, Queen of Riva, stamped a bare foot. "Obey me!" she commanded.

"Och, sure now, Tammy, darlin', listen to Mrs. Pippy, there's a dear——"

"There will be no talk. Obey!"

"Julia," said Mrs. Pippy firmly, "in this house you take your orders from me. When Miss Larrieau is properly dressed she may receive Mr. Pritchard, but not before."

"Julia is my servant. She takes orders from no one but me," Tamea warned Mrs. Pippy. "Dan Pritchard gave Julia to me."

"Julia is not a slave, to be given away at will, Miss Larrieau. She must be consulted in such transactions."

"Did you not accept me as your mistress, Julia?" There could be no evasion.

"I did that," Julia confessed weakly.

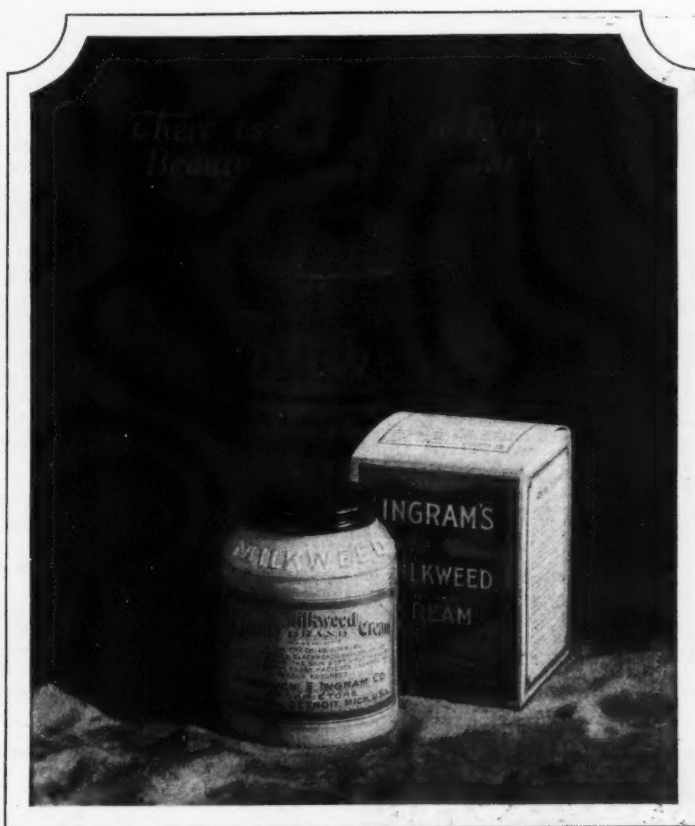
"Summon Monsieur Dan Pritchard. Take no heed of this woman—this Pippy."

"If you disobey me, Julia," Mrs. Pippy warned, "I shall be forced to dismiss you without a reference."

"If you disobey me, Julia," Tamea countered, "I shall dismiss you but not until you have been beaten. In my country that is how bad servants are treated."

Julia appealed to Maisie. "What shall I do, Miss Morrison?"

Maisie sighed. "It is apparent, Julia," she replied, "that Mrs. Pippy and Tamea have not hit it off very well together. Mrs. Pippy's position in this house must not, she very properly feels, be questioned. Tamea, who has doubtless never heretofore had her authority questioned, has elected to make an issue of the seat of authority. We will seek a compromise." She turned to Tamea and smiled upon her.



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kindly. "Will you please me, Tamea, by declining to oppose Mrs. Pippy's authority in this house?"

"I will not, Maisie, although I am sorry not to be kind to you. I am not one accustomed to taking orders and I will not have this Pippy thwart my desires. As you say, I have elected to force the issue. It is better thus. Why wait? Julia, for the last time, I order you to obey my command."

"Heaven help me!" groaned Julia, and turned to open the door. Mrs. Pippy's cool, firm voice halted her.

"Julia!"

"I'm thinkin', Mrs. Pippy, ye'll have a hard time queenin' it over a rale queen," said Julia. She made Mrs. Pippy a curious curtsy. "I quits yer service, ma'am," she announced, thereby in the language of the sporting world beating the excellent Mrs. Pippy to the punch. The door closed behind her.

"You are dismissed. Pack and leave at once." Thus the Pippy edict, shouted after the retiring maid.

Tamea smiled and watched the door until Dan Pritchard knocked on it.

"Come, Dan Pritchard," Tamea called. She was standing in the center of the room, on parade as it were, when he entered and permitted his amazed glance to rest upon her. Maisie saw him recoil perceptibly, saw him as quickly become master of the situation.

"Well, well, what a marvelous apparition!" was all he said.

"You like these garments?"

"Indeed I do, Tamea. Put the coat on, please, until I see the fit of it . . ." He sat down and waited until Tamea had finished. Then: "Stunning, by Jupiter! Maisie, I'm so grateful to you for helping Tamea and me. You're the shadow of a rock in a weary land."

He approached Tamea and fingered the material in her suit. "Do you think this is quite heavy enough, Maisie?" he queried anxiously. "Our climate is not quite so salubrious as our little queen is accustomed to."

Tamea came close to him, grasping each lapel, gazing upward at him with frank approval and admiration.

"You would not care to have your Tamea die?" she queried.

"Indeed, my dear, I would not."

"You would not care to have your Tamea put out of this warm house to suffer in the cold?"

"Certainly not."

"You will never, never put Tamea away from you?"

"Great Scott, no! I promised your father I'd take care of you, child. What's worrying you?"

Tamea sighed. "I have felt the necessity to leave this house," she confessed, "unless assured that my orders to my servant will not be interfered with. Pippy grows very—well, what you call—fresh!"

Dan sensed the approach of a cyclone and hastily sought the cellar. "My dear Tamea," he assured her, "it is conceivable that you may find me growing what you call fresh if you seek to impose your will on mine. Mrs. Pippy's orders to the servants of this house must be obeyed by those servants. Meanwhile, try to be nice and—er—polite to Mrs. Pippy."

"I think you ought to know what Tamea is driving at, Dan," Maisie

interposed. "Tamea is in open rebellion against Mrs. Pippy and the disaffection has spread to Julia."

"Mr. Pritchard," said Mrs. Pippy with great dignity, "I have found it necessary to dismiss Julia for insubordination."

"Julia belongs to me. Pippy cannot dismiss my Julia, can she, dear Dan Pritchard?" Thus the unhappy man, caught between the cross-fire of the conflicting pair. Dan looked helplessly at Maisie, who eyed him sympathetically and humorously. "Let there be no weakness here," Tamea warned. "I would have my answer."

"Why, of course, you asked me for Julia and I said you could have her," Dan began. At that moment Julia entered the room. "Julia," Dan queried, "do you desire to remain in the service of Miss Larrieau?"

"Humph! Faith, I've never left her service, sir."

"Mrs. Pippy informs me she has dismissed you."

"The back o' me hand to Mrs. Pippy," Julia had started running true to her racial instincts, which dictate a bold, offensive spirit in the face of disaster.

"Julia remains!" cried Tamea.

"Julia goes!"

Devoutly Dan wished that an old-fashioned magician were on hand to render him invisible.

"Dear Mrs. Pippy," he pleaded, "I appeal to the undoubted wisdom of your years—to your innate sense of proportion—er—to your—why, dash it all, this difference of opinion about Julia has me in the very deuce of a box. Surely you must realize, Mrs. Pippy, the total lack of reason, of understanding, from our viewpoint, in this child!"

"Oh," Tamea interrupted coldly, "you think I am a fool!" Suddenly she commenced to cry and cast herself, sobbing, upon the Pritchard breast.

He glanced over her heaving ivory shoulders to Mrs. Pippy, then to Maisie. "I've taken a big contract," he complained.

"Julia goes," said Mrs. Pippy firmly.

Tamea heard the edict and her round, wonderful arms clasped Dan Pritchard a trifle tighter—it seemed that her heart was just one notch closer to disintegration.

"Julia stays," she sobbed. "You gave Julia to your Tamea—yes, you did—you did—you did!"

Suddenly, impelled by what cosmic force he knew not, Dan Pritchard made his decision and with it precipitated upon his defenseless head a swarm of troubles.

"Excuse me, dear Mrs. Pippy," he said gently. "I am sorry to have to veto your decision, which I trust is not an unalterable one. Julia—confound her Celtic skin—stays!"

Mrs. Pippy bowed her silvery head with the utmost composure and swept magnificently from the room; Tamea raised her tear-stained face from Dan's breast, took a Pritchard ear in each hand, drew his face down to hers and rewarded him for his fearless stand with a somewhat moist and fervent kiss. Maisie, watching the tableau composedly, felt a sharp, sudden stab of resentment against Tamea—or was it jealousy?

"Well, that's settled," she remarked dryly, and Dan sensed the sting.

He looked at his watch. "Got to be going down to the office," he mumbled,

presenting the first excuse for escape that came to his mind. His anxious glance searched Maisie's blue eyes in vain for that humorous glint that had marked them when he first entered the room. "Please help me, Maisie," he murmured appealingly. "I've got my hands full."

Maisie nodded. "I'll try to undo the mischief, Dan. By the way, Uncle John told me something this morning that you ought to know. He's up to his silly eyebrows in the rice market."

"The double-crossing old idiot! I had begun to suspect he was up to some skulduggery. I was on his trail and would have smoked him out in a day or two."

"I imagine that is why he told auntie and me about it. He wanted me to break the news to you, I think."

Dan's head hung low on his breast—the sad Abraham Lincoln look was in his face and in his troubled eyes. Tamea, looking up at him very soberly now, read the distress which, momentarily, he could not conceal; in a sudden burst of sympathy her arm started to curve around his neck.

"Oh, stop it, stop it, Tamea!" Maisie cried sharply. "Mr. Pritchard is not accustomed to such intimate personal attentions from comparative strangers."

Tamea drew away from Dan quickly. "Dress yourself!" Maisie commanded. "Julia, help her. Dan, run along and try not to worry."

Tamea's eyes flashed, but nevertheless she sat down and when Julia handed her a pair of black silken hose she commenced dutifully to draw them on.

"Much obliged for the tip, Maisie. I'll start a riot in Casson and Pritchard's office this very day. By the way, I think Mrs. Pippy is on her high horse. Please try to wheedle her down."

"Mrs. Pippy has resigned, Dan." "The deuce she has; how do you know?" "Why, any woman of spirit would."

He pondered this. "Oh, well, let her go if she wants to. She's scarcely human at times. Well, if she insists upon leaving I'll give her a year's salary in advance . . . Damnation . . . Good morning, Maisie, dear. Please try to reason with—the sundry females about this house . . . Tamea, I go to my office. Be a good girl."

"You are my father and my mother," she replied humbly. "I will kiss you farewell." And she did it.

"This primitive young witch has been in this house less than twenty-four hours and already she has kissed that defenseless man twice in my presence. I have known Dan all my life—and I have kissed him but once," Maisie thought.

The stab of resentment, of jealousy, perhaps, was more poignant this time; in addition Maisie was just a little bit peeved at the ease with which Tamea had achieved her victory.

Maisie had sufficient imagination to understand why Tamea, daughter of a thousand despots, with the instinct to rule complicated by the desire, must be excused for precipitating the clash with Mrs. Pippy. But what Maisie could also understand very clearly, since she too was a woman, was that Tamea, by the grace of her sex and her shameless effrontery in using every wife of that sex, was likely to become absolute master of Dan Pritchard's establishment. The man was helpless before her. Maisie permitted a challenging



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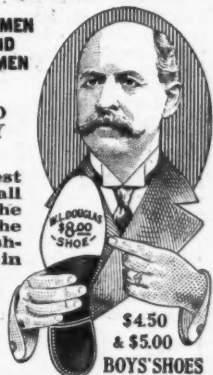
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gleam in the glance which she now bent upon Tamea.

Tamea intercepted that glance and interpreted it correctly. It was as if Maisie had heliographed to her: "Young lady, you've got a fight on your hands." Without an instant's hesitation Tamea's smoky orbs acknowledged the message and flashed back the reply: "Very well. I accept the challenge."

Then Maisie smiled, and Tamea, with hot resentment in her heart, smiled back.

CHAPTER X

DAN left his home with the alacrity of one who seeks escape from a most uncomfortable situation. As a bachelor he was conscious of the fact that this morning there had been four women too many in his life. He cringed from the prospect of having Mrs. Pippy resign his service in a huff. He hoped she would, under Maisie's cogent reasoning, consent to make allowances for Tamea until Maisie should have impressed upon the latter the fact that in a white democracy a South Sea Island queen was expected to be seen and not heard.

"Tamea is such a child," Dan told himself. "And a spoiled child at that. Old Gaston has permitted her to do exactly as she pleased, and now the task of correcting that mistake is mine. It isn't going to be an easy task, and what's more I haven't the slightest idea where to commence and where to stop . . . What fragrant hair she has . . . such an appealing creature. When she weeps she's just a broken-hearted little girl . . . makes me want to take her on my knee and soothe her . . ."

"Maisie's nose went up a trifle the first time the child kissed me, and there was steel in her voice when she reproved Tamea. Fine state of affairs if she and Tamea fail to hit it off together and Tamea elects to use me as a club to hurt Maisie. I have a feeling it would be like her to try! Come to think of it, most women would! As soon as Tamea has adjusted herself to her new life, I'll pack her off to some select school."

He picked up the annunciator and ordered Graves to halt alongside the first news stand he could find. Thus presently he found himself with half a dozen magazines, skimming through their advertising pages in search of some hint of the most advantageous school for girls of Tamea's sort. Preferably the school should be situated in the center of a boundless prairie; as an additional safeguard, it should be surrounded by a very tall barbed-wire fence or a cactus hedge and sans communication with the outside world.

By the time Graves had deposited him on the sidewalk before his office building the problem of the right school was as far from solution as ever, and a growing resentment against Gaston of the Beard was rising in Dan's heart. Down under the Southern Cross the problem of living was an easy one. Why, then, had Gaston transplanted this girl to a land where the problem was so complicated—where she was so certain to add to the complications?

"I feel tremendous events portending," Dan soliloquized. "The very foundations of my life are tottering."

On his desk he found a memorandum from his secretary to the effect that he was to call Miss Morrison at his home the moment he came in.

"Hello, Dan!" Maisie's voice carried

a triumphant note that cheered him wonderfully. "I merely wanted to relieve your mind of your domestic worries before you crossed swords with Uncle John. I have had a talk with Mrs. Pippy and she will remain—for the present at least."

"I'll raise her monthly stipend very materially," he answered gratefully. "Have you talked to Tamea?"

"No, but I shall, Dan. I realize the precise proportions of the predicament your generous acceptance of a white man's burden has placed you in. So, my dear, I dare say I shall have to stand at thy right hand and hold the bridge with thee."

"God bless you for that, Maisie. I think Tamea is a wonderfully affectionate girl—fiery, but generous, loyal and grateful, but hard to handle. She must be appealed to through her heart rather than her head."

"You don't know anything about it, Dan." Maisie rather bit that sentence off short. "That's her plan for ruling you—via your soft heart and your softer head. The girl Tamea has brains, she can reason and she can understand, and the instant she realizes that your words of wisdom are about to undermine her opposition to your desires, she will make a flying leap for your manly breast—"

"Do you really think she might develop such a habit?"

"Dan, she's a fully developed woman—"

"Don't build me a mare's nest, Maisie. She's just a little girl."

"Have it your way. But I warn you she's the sort of little girl that a respectable bachelor cannot afford to have around his house a day longer than is quite necessary. That sounds catty, Dan, but I know whereof I speak."

"Yes, I suppose I'll have to do something radical and do it quickly," he agreed.

"Thank you, Maisie—a million thanks."

"Happy to be of service to you, old boy."

"Maisie! Will you accord me another favor?"

"Certainly. What is it?"

"Consider yourself duly and affectionately kissed."

"Oh! Dan, you're developing a habit. But don't you think two kisses are quite sufficient to start the day with?"

"That was a little mean feminine jab, Maisie. Good by. I'm going to hang up."

He did, albeit smiling and much relieved. He could now turn to the task of standing old John Casson on the latter's snowy head, so to speak, and see how much rice would run out of his pockets.

Experience had taught Dan that the best way to handle his partner was to rough him from the start, for, like all weak and pompous men, Casson was not superabundantly endowed with courage or the ability to think fast and clearly under fire. He would fight defensively but never offensively, and Dan had discovered the great fundamental truth that the offensive generally wins, the defensive never.

He summoned his secretary. "Miss Mather, please inform Mr. Casson that I desire to confer with him—in my office—immediately."

As he had anticipated, old Casson obeyed him without question.

"Well, boy, what have you got on your mind this morning?" he began genially.

"Rice," Dan answered curtly. "Sit down."

Casson walked to the window, looked

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out over the vista of bay and commenced thinking as rapidly as he could under the circumstances.

"I told you to sit down," Dan reminded him crisply. "I mean it. Sit down and face me. I want to look into your face and smoke the deception out of it."

"By the gods of war, I'll not stand such talk from any man!" Old Casson had decided to bluster.

Dan glowered at him. "You'll stand it from me. You've got some rice deals on in this crazy market and you've kept the news of your operations from me. Have you speculated any in coffee or sugar?"

"No, no, Dan. Nothing but rice."

"What sort of rice have you committed us to—California or Oriental?"

"Both."

"Playing alone or in a pool?"

"Alone."

"How much California rice have you purchased?"

"One million sacks."

"Paid for any of it?"

"Half of it. Balance in sixty days."

"Where is the rice?"

"Scattered in various warehouses throughout the upper Sacramento valley."

"I didn't notice that our bank account had been particularly depleted during the month I was in Hawaii. You bought the rice on open credit, hypothecated the warehouse receipts with various banks, paid for half the rice with the proceeds and used the remainder of the loan to pyramid with. I suppose you sunk that in a little jag of Philippine rice."

"I did," Casson admitted, flushed and anxious. He had seated himself, facing Dan.

"Holding your warehoused rice for a rising market, eh?"

"Exactly."

"Suppose the bottom drops out?"

Casson shrugged and for the first time smiled. "I think, Pritchard, you'll have to admit that I've put one over on you this time, and what's more, you're going to like it. I bought that California rice at prices ranging from nine and a quarter to ten and a half cents per pound, and today it is worth twenty. We stand to clean up a hundred thousand dollars on that lot alone."

"We are engaged in legitimate business, not food profiteering. Can you dispose of that million sacks readily?"

"Had an offer of twenty cents for it this morning."

"Reliable people?"

"Rated up to five million, A-A-A-one."

"Cash?"

"No, ninety days."

"Suspicious. Don't like ninety day paper. The banks are beginning to discriminate in their loans. All over the country there has been a wide expansion of credit in all lines, due to war time prosperity, and my guess is that the demand for credit will soon result in the usual banking situation. The banks will discover that their loans have so increased as to be out of proportion to their reserves and deposits; and if the banks once get frightened, business will be crippled overnight."

"Pooh, no danger of that for a couple of years yet, Prit hard."

"On that subject I prefer sounder advice than yours, Mr. Casson. Call up the people who want that rice and tell them

we're willing to cut our price considerably if they will pay cash."

"Sorry, but it can't be done, my boy. I've already traded on a ninety day basis. Don't worry. We're perfectly safe."

"With you, the wish is father to the thought. How much Oriental rice have you bought?"

"We've got the British steamer Malayan loading a cargo of eight thousand tons in Manila, for Havana, Cuba. On or about the middle of next month the steamer Chinook will load four thousand tons at Shanghai, for delivery at Havana."

"Our specialty, of which we have a good, safe, working knowledge, is South Sea products—mostly copra, and the operation of ships. The shoemaker should stick to his last. Now, then, listen to my ultimatum. If the sun sets today and leaves Casson and Pritchard the proprietors of rice stored anywhere except in our respective kitchens, you and I are going to dissolve partnership about an hour after the sun rises tomorrow. And, whether you realize it or not, the moment our partnership is dissolved, that moment you start tobogganing to ruin."

Casson rose and stretched himself carelessly. "Oh, well, boy," he replied, the patronizing quality of his words driving Dan into a silent fury, "suppose we leave the crossing of our bridges until we come to them."

Dan's fist smashed down on his desk with a thud that caused old Casson and the inkwell to jump simultaneously. "We'll cross our bridges today," he roared, "and we'll start now. Sit down, you consummate old jackass!"

Casson trembled, paled and sat down very abruptly. "My dear Dan, control yourself," he stammered.

"I'll control myself, never fear. My chief job is controlling you. How dare you commit me to ruin without consulting me?"

"Ruin? Ridiculous! Only a fool would have neglected this golden opportunity—and I'm the senior member of this firm and a sixty percent owner in it." Simulating righteous indignation, Casson too commenced to pound Dan's desk.

"No bluffs!" Dan ordered, and took down the intercommunicating office telephone. The chief clerk responded. "Bring to me immediately all of the data pertaining to Mr. Casson's rice operations," he ordered. He hung up and faced Casson.

"That will be all, Mr. Casson. From this moment you are out of the rice market and I'm in it. I'll attend to the marketing of more rice than this firm is worth."

"Pritchard, I forbid this!"

"Very well." Dan reached for his hat.

"I'm going up to our banker and tell him all about your rice deals. A business man should be as frank with his banker as with his lawyer. You'll get your orders from the man higher up. If a loss threatens us, I prefer to have the blow fall now."

The battle was over. "Oh, have it your own way, my boy!" Casson cried disgustingly and with a wave of his plump hand absolved himself from any and all disasters that might overtake the firm.

Half an hour later a well known rice broker appeared in Dan's office in response to the latter's telephoned request.

"This firm," Dan announced, "owns eight thousand tons of rice now loading for Havana, in Manila. It owns four thousand tons due to be loaded in thirty days at

Shanghai. Is that rice quickly salable?"

"How soon do you want it sold?"

"Immediately."

"Can do—at a price."

"Do it!" Dan Pritchard commanded.

"And if you can dig me up a cash customer—at a cent or two under the market—I'll pay you an extra quarter of one percent commission."

"Cash, eh? Well, that's a bit doubtful. However, that extra commission will make me work. I'll report back when I have something you can get your teeth into."

"May I hope to hear from you today?"

"Scarcely. The market's a bit off—somewhat sluggish. Trading has been pretty rapid of late, and the opinion prevails in some quarters that the market has about reached saturation."

"Many traders unloading?"

"Oh, no! Everybody is still holding on for a further rise in price, which I personally believe will come. We're all optimists in the rice market."

"Well, I'm a pessimist, but only because I do not care for rice. I have never dealt in it before and I don't know anything about the rice market. Frankly, I'm closing out some trades of Mr. Casson's under his protest. My instructions to you are practically to throw Casson's trades overboard in order to get us out of the rice market."

The broker eyed him keenly. "No necessity for getting stamped and breaking the market," he suggested.

The remainder of that day Dan devoted to Tamea's business. First he went to the Appraisers' Building and declared the pearls which Gaston had smuggled in on the Moorea. Having paid the duty on them, he called on the leading jewelers and had them appraised again, after which he added ten percent to the appraisal value and sold the entire lot to a wholesale jeweler for cash. He reasoned, very wisely, that at the height of a period of such prosperity as the country had not hitherto known, the selected pearls of Gaston of the Beard would never bring a better price. He then deposited all of her funds to the credit of "Daniel Pritchard, guardian of Tamea Oluolu Larrieau, a minor," in a number of savings banks. He next called upon his attorney, who drew up, at his request, a formal petition to the Superior Court for letters of guardianship for Tamea.

Yes, Dan was a practical business man, a slave to the accepted forms. He was taking his office as Tamea's guardian so very seriously that his position was analogous to that of the man who failed to see the woods because of the trees. It did not occur to him that the administration of an estate for a minor who knew nothing of the value of money and cared less, who had never known discipline and who yielded instantly to every elemental human desire and instinct, might be provocative of much distress and loss of sleep to him. On the contrary, what he did do was to return to his office hugely satisfied with the world as at that moment constituted.

Our advice is—watch Mark Mellenger: In the next—October—instalment he leaps in where angels fear to tread, with astonishing results for Tamea, Maisie and Dan.

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Play Fair with the Youngsters



THERE they go trudging off to school with shining morning faces—books tucked under arms—your greatest treasures—our country's Future Citizens! What a wonderful privilege to have these little lives in your keeping.

Do you love them enough—these children of yours? Are you going to play fair with them? Are you going to make sure that they are physically able to stand the strain of the school year?

Just because they have rosy cheeks and bright eyes, don't make the common mistake of taking it for granted that your youngsters must be perfectly well. What do you know about eyes, throats, ears, teeth, lungs, hearts, posture, etc.?

Wherever tests have been made, records usually show that the boys and girls who are backward in their studies are suffering from some physical defect which, if taken in time, could be easily corrected. They aren't *dull*—they're *sick*.

These helpless little children are dependent upon you to save them from the lifelong unhappy consequences of neglected health and neglected education. Do not let sickness keep your boys and girls from getting the education they will need in future years.

Dr. S. Josephine Baker, former Director of the Bureau of Child Hygiene of New York City, states that "approximately 35% of the children of school age have one or more physical abnormalities;" and she adds that this condition is "universal".

It is most important that health examinations be made regularly in the public schools for the sake of those children who could not otherwise be taken care of.

In many cities this work is first undertaken

by a group of benevolent, public-spirited men and women who have supported a program of medical examinations and free clinics in the public schools. The work is usually taken over later by the city and an appropriation voted to cover necessary expenses. That may be the way in which the work can best be begun in your community.

The best time for preventive work is in pre-school days—from babyhood to six years.

Just as the best time to take care of the health of the baby is before it is born, so the best time to take care of the school child is before it enters school, rather than after.

The Metropolitan Life Insurance Company has published three booklets on the care of children which it will be glad to send you—"Care of the Teeth", "Tonsils and Adenoids" and "Eyesight and Health". You will find them helpful.

HALEY FISKE, President.



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And He was a Sickly Child!

Can you imagine that the Theodore Roosevelt you have always known—the man of indomitable strength—the tireless reader and doer and thinker—was a delicate, fragile child?

Some parents might have sighed over the fact that little Teddy was so sickly and let it go at that. Instead, Theodore Roosevelt's parents gave him the special care and attention that he needed and he grew strong and well. Theodore Roosevelt, famous President of the United States, student and naturalist, intrepid hunter and explorer, athlete, leader of men, might have been a useless bit of driftwood in the stream of life had his parents been less wise. They built his body first. His schooling followed.

In writing of his delicate boyhood, Theodore Roosevelt said, "The recollection of my experience gives me a keen sympathy with those who are trying in our public schools and elsewhere to remove the physical cause of deficiency in children, who are often unjustly blamed for being obstinate or unambitious or stupid."

Things You Can Do

Make sure that *your* children are in fit condition to go back to school. There are four things at least to do immediately.

1. Eyes. Children who cannot see clearly are under a constant nervous strain which is bound to affect their health. Have your children's eyes examined by a competent specialist.

2. Throats. Have your children examined for adenoids and diseased tonsils. Total deafness and many serious illnesses often come from neglecting this danger zone.

3. Ears. Thousands of children are thought dull in school because they cannot hear distinctly. If anything is wrong with your child's hearing consult a specialist.

4. Teeth. Much sickness comes from decayed teeth. Physicians say that poison may be carried in the blood from the tooth to other parts of the body. Take your children to a dentist.

Send your boys and girls back to school this fall as healthy as possible. The day is not far off when these youngsters of ours will be the backbone of the Nation—*make them strong!*

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